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BROKEN FAMILIES

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES
UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-EIGHTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

OVERSIGHT ON THE BREAKDOWN OF THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY UNIT, FOCUSING ON THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE, SEPARATION AND CONFLICT WITHIN MARRIAGE ON CHILDREN AND ON WOMEN AND MEN

MARCH 22 AND 24, 1983

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BROKEN FAMILIES

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 1983

U.S. Senate,
Subcommittee on Family and Human Services,
Committee on Labor and Human Resources,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:50 a.m., in room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Jeremiah Denton (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Denton and Grassley.

Opening Statement of Senator Denton

Senator Denton. Good morning. This hearing will please come to order.

I would like to welcome the witnesses and guests to the first hearing of the Subcommittee on Family and Human Services in the 98th Congress and extend a particular welcome to my friend and colleague, Senator Chuck Grassley. Senator Grassley is the chairman of the Aging Subcommittee of the Labor and Human Resources Committee.

I just came from a press conference with the chairman, Orrin Hatch, who might be dropping in this morning at this hearing.

We begin today the first in a series of oversight hearings on what some consider to be the Nation's most serious crisis, the breakdown of the traditional family unit. The manner in which these hearings will be conducted will recognize that the crisis is a sensitive and complex social problem involving individual men, women, and children in a multitude of unique situations, all of which are difficult.

Today's hearing, entitled "Broken Family: Overview and Effects on Children" will be followed on Thursday by a second hearing on the effects of family breakdown on women and men.

In June we will continue on with two hearings investigating the causes and possible solutions to the broken family epidemic in the United States.

One way or another, the policies which our Federal Government establishes by law or by regulation can play a major role in promoting either family unity or family disintegration. Indeed, a number of laws under the jurisdiction of this subcommittee may influence the stability of the family.

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act, on which we will soon begin a series of hearings prior to its reauthorization, bears significantly on what might be in some cases an effect of family breakdown. In my view, the rising rates of adolescent pregnancy can be a cause of adolescents experiencing later difficulties in holding a marriage together.

Conversely, the urge of adolescents to seek love through habituated premarital sexual relations may be seen as a result of a lack of love felt during and after marital breakdown.

The problem of adolescent pregnancy is addressed directly by both title X of the Public Health Services Act, otherwise known as Federal family planning, and by the Adolescent Family Life Act, which Congress enacted less than 2 years ago as an alternative approach to the problem of adolescent pregnancy.

As you know, there has been recently a regulation issued by HHS regarding involvement of the parents of minors in the title X family planning program. The regulation somewhat parallels the Adolescent Family Life Act. Both of these programs can alter the attitudes, values, and lifestyles adopted by our young people, thus affecting the probability of success of subsequent marriages.

Let me make clear how we chose to define the term, "broken family." By that phrase is meant more than just the divorced family. It means parents who live apart; parents who never married; and particularly, mothers who must raise their children with little or no assistance or support from a husband.

Broken family means trauma both during and after the breakdown, trauma which long persists in various manifestations for each of the parents and children, manifestations which spread beyond the family to other relatives, friends, and associates. In 1963, the divorce rate was 2.3 per 1,000 persons in the population; the provisional data for 1982 shows 5.1 divorces per 1,000 persons—an astounding 121 percent increase in the divorce rate in less than 20 years.

Thirty-five million individuals now live in a household headed by a single man or woman. The number of children living with only one parent has doubled since 1960 so that, according to one estimate, 45 percent of all children born in 1977 will live in a single parent home before reaching age 18.

According to one mental health expert, Dr. Derek Miller, chief of the adolescent program at Northwestern University's Institute of Psychiatry, "For adolescents, this is probably the worst time to be growing up since the Middle Ages when the bubonic plague created chaos."

He cited as reasons for this chaos the skyrocketing divorce rate, single parent families, widespread drug abuse, permissiveness, and a fragmentation of traditional social support systems. These factors all contribute to making suicide the No. 1 cause of death among adolescents, according to Dr. Miller's analysis. I would note that when I was a teenager it was not in the first 20 causes of teenage death.

Although 1 out of every 8 children now lives in a single parent home, we have good reason to believe that the traditional family is still the standard, is still our Nation's basic social unit, and is still the ultimate goal of most unmarried individuals. The majority of marriages do not end in divorce. The majority of children are still raised to adulthood by both of their parents at home together.

Indeed, according to one recent survey, two-thirds of all married adults said they were very happy with their marriages, and only 3 percent claimed they were not too happy. The great majority of children characterized their family as close and intimate.

Most promising indeed are statistics released last Thursday by the National Center for Health Statistics, which showed that the number of divorces dropped in 1982 for the first time in 20 years. The center attributes this drop to the depressed economy, while others, perhaps not as objectively, have asserted that the recent economic difficulties have actually promoted divorce.

However, for the growing numbers of children for whom a close and intimate family life is anything but a reality and for whom parental supervision and association is either minimal or nonexistent, the implications and potential effects of family breakdown are far-reaching. They extend to the emotional health of the child, to the child's academic performance, to the child's ability to establish lasting relationships with others, and to the child's personality and self-esteem.

The lack of rearing—in all that the word "rearing" connotes—which in all too many cases is the result of family breakdown, that lack may also affect the quality of the child's future well being and citizenship in terms of his or her self-respect and respect for authority, with consequent propensities toward such miscreant behavior as alcohol and drug abuse, criminality, and even disloyalty toward country.

Of course, behavioral problems are by no means the inevitable outcome of family breakdown. Since the beginning of civilization, single parents have been forced to raise their children alone, following death of or desertion by a spouse. Some such children may acquire a degree of self-sufficiency and maturity which others take years to attain.

But unlike previous generations, the stresses and pressures placed on children and teenagers today are more profound than in any previous time in history. Drug and alcohol abuse is all around them. More and more teenagers are pressured into sexual intercourse at younger and younger ages.

The vast majority of TV programs, movies, contemporary song lyrics, modern novels, and magazines depict role models finding sexual satisfaction in every other situation except within marriage. Rarely do TV shows imply the truth, the truth of faithful married couples fully enjoying sex within the proper context of spiritual and physical love which holds together a relationship that is always demanding, sometimes boring, but generally exciting, and incomparably fulfilling.

Are our children being taught the successful road to happiness, or are they propagandized with the joys of a false freedom, freedom from commitment, from love, from responsible citizenship? Are they being sold a bill of goods which leads neither to the promised joy nor to the promised freedom, but to a wearying and abiding servitude to unhappiness?

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Family and Human Services and as a student of history, I am aware that when a nation reaches the point at which such a malaise pervades that very foundation of society, the family, the whole nation sickens from not only the social effects of the malaise, but also from the accompanying economic and stragegic effects. That awareness and the resulting concern about our present national circumstances motivated me to call these hearings.

As I said before, our society may now be turning a corner. Divorce rates have begun to decline for the first time in years; marriages increased in 1982 for the 7 consecutive years.

At the same time, prominent women's magazines occasionally carry stories on the joys of fidelity and commitment. However, I can recall one popular magazine about 2 years ago having a typical story on the front cover on how to entertain your children while conducting an affair at home. Even such a famous sex symbol as Raquel Welch was quoted in Family Weekly as saying: "All the poetic ideas aside, perhaps we could just simplify, especially in male-female relations, and get back to the basics: home, family, mutual support."

"It is not dull and lackluster," she said.

I believe our children are coming to a similar recognition. U.S. News & World Report tells us that traditional values are on an upward swing among today's youth, and that has been my personal observation as I go around this country. America's major youth organizations, such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, are experiencing large upsurges in membership and enthusiasm. One reason for this trend, according to a study done for Boy Scouts of America, is that among young people ages 8 to 18, there is a "crying out for family, a yearning to belong to a group."

Some would say and are saying that the family unit has degenerated in the United States to a point of no return. I happen to think not. I certainly hope not. But in some measure, Government policy and the tone of our Nation's leadership will influence either the revitalization or the further weakening of the family.

Our President is aware of this and has spoken courageously and forthrightly on the issue. If we in Congress are truly committed to promoting the general welfare, we can remain neither silent nor indifferent on this issue.

To begin today's hearing on the consequences of the rejection of lifelong marital commitment, several experts will examine the effects of divorce and single parenthood on children. We will hear a discussion on the types of effects, their variations based on the age of the child, the time of divorce, the sex of the child, and the degree of communication between child and both parents following divorce.

I hope our witnesses will also discuss how the effects vary based on the level of hostility between parents following divorce and the cause of spousal separation. We will also hear about children's attitudes toward their parents' choice of divorce and remaining together.

Our first witness, Mr. George Gallup, Jr., will present an overview of American's attitudes toward the value of family life, and he will be followed by Prof. Amitai Etzioni, who will begin the discussion of the effects of family breakdown on children.

Before I ask them to step forward, I would ask my colleague and friend, Senator Grassley, if he has an opening statement.

Senator **GRASSLEY**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I simply want to take this opportunity to commend you for your diligence in airing this topic and comment on the topic generally because it, like so many other problems that we see on a daily basis, has no easy prepackaged solution to the problems that are frequently encountered in single parent households.

But unlike most of these problems, the one which we are studying here today affects one of the most fundamental components of our society, the family and its disintegration, and hopefully reformation as it affects the child.

The custody aspects of a divorce case differ from the other aspects in a divorce proceeding; the custody case is concerned with the welfare, possession, care, and education of a child. The custody case must make a prediction about the future; the child's existing world has been radically disrupted, and the court, for society as a whole and for the protection of the child, is asked which of two or more concededly unsatisfactory dispositions will best serve that child's welfare.

Past events are often of little help in the prediction because the child faces a set of circumstances radically different from those in his past. It is hardly surprising that the results are often unhappy, and I hope that the upward trends signifying stability in marriages that the chairman has spoken to are real. I also hope that not only through the work of this subcommittee, but through a general recognition by society as a whole, the stability of marriages will continue to be more favorable in the future.

Before we go to witnesses, I would like to suggest to you that your list has two very important Iowa roots, one very obvious from the roster of witnesses, the other one not so obvious. The previous generation of Gallups came from Jefferson, Iowa, and Washington, Iowa, and have roots at the University of Iowa.

Also, we have with us the distinguished doctor of pediatrics, Peter Wallace. As a private practitioner, he has been in a very good position to see firsthand effects that a divorce may have upon the child's physical and emotional health. And I believe you will find the testimony of both of these distinguished gentlemen noteworthy. I look forward to participating in this hearing. I will be in and out because we do have the conflict, as you know, Mr. Chairman, since you are also a member of the Judiciary Committee. We are trying to work a solution to the bankruptcy court jurisdictional defects in the Judiciary Committee this morning.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Senator Grassley. To give you an idea of what goes on in this madhouse up here, at 10 o'clock I was supposed to be testifying in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Appropriations Committee regarding El Salvador, and attending the meeting which Senator Grassley referred to.

But I consider this top priority. I am very encouraged that I am not conducting this solo; normally, I am. Normally, a subcommittee chairman is conducting a hearing alone. Senator Grassley is deeply interested in this. Senator Nickles is deeply interested in this and would be here now if he were not required to be at another hearing. Senator Humphrey is extremely interested in this, and I hope our Democratic colleagues are as interested in this issue as they were in 1981 when the full committee unanimously passed the adolescent family life bill.

Mr. Gallup is also from Princeton, whence graduated my staff director in this subcommittee, and his name is known throughout the world. We will ask him and the equally famed Professor Etzioni to please come forward at this time.

Before asking you to proceed with your opening statements, I would like to insert for the record a statement by Senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut. Without objection, it will be so inserted.

[The prepared statement of Senator Dodd follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR DODD

Senator DODD. Mr. Chairman, I wish to compliment you for holding such a timely hearing. All too often in this society, we do not measure the effects on children of certain actions taken by adults. Regrettably, divorce is but one instance of an area where we have not focused sufficiently on the repercussions for younger Americans involved.

I commend the distinguished witnesses testifying before us today. They are well qualified indeed to tell us what support and services must be provided at school, at home, and in court for children whose parents are separating from each other. The Congress must certainly do all it can to assist the social science, medical, and legal experts now helping such children.

Let me conclude my opening remarks by emphasizing that we must provide necessary supports for children in all our Nation's families, whether they be extended, nuclear, or single-parent families. As Dorothy Rich from the Home and School Institute will attest to this morning, all such families are "citadels of care and concern" for children.

American young people are our most important resource. With them, quite literally lies our future. We, in the Senate and House of Representatives, should be in the "business," if you will, of investing wisely in this future.

Welcome Mr. Gallup. Welcome Dr. Etzioni. I hope you have an opening statement, Mr. Gallup, and ask you to proceed.

STATEMENTS OF GEORGE GALLUP, JR., PRESIDENT, GALLUP POLL, PRINCETON, N.J., AND AMITAI ETZIONI, DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR POLICY RESEARCH, AND PROFESSOR, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. GALLUP. Fine. Thank you, Senator. Senator Denton, Senator Grassley, it is a great honor and a great privilege to be here today to give testimony on survey results dealing with the attitudes of the U.S. public toward marriage and the family.

I and many others applaud your efforts to discover ways to deal with the broken family crisis in the United States, which is taking a serious toll on the children of our country.

Certainly, no cause is so compelling to the people of this Nation as the plight of mistreated, neglected, and abandoned children who are defenseless and have few resources or recourses of their own to deal with their plight. It is of vital importance that the Nation's attention be riveted on this problem of the broken family and its effect on children; that the public be brought into a discussion of ways to deal with this problem.

This morning I shall report briefly on overall survey findings on U.S. attitudes toward marriage and the family and offer various possible solutions that seem indicated by survey data. I should note that these are broad, national findings and that it would be important, of course, to examine various subgroups within the population because there are some very sharp differences by subgroups in terms of income, educational level, and there are differences among races.

Further details of these surveys can be found in my written report.

I should also bring your attention to a comprehensive national study we conducted in 1980 for the White House Conference on Families, and I will be happy to make copies of this report available to anyone who wishes them.

Furthermore, if any member of the committee needs survey data on a specific item, which is presently not available, I would be happy to include the appropriate question or questions on an upcoming Gallup poll.

The American people cherish the family as nothing else in their lives. Their anguish, therefore, is particularly deep when marriages do not work and families fall apart, as is happening with depressing frequency in the United States today.

New and creative ways to help families are urgently needed and eagerly sought by Americans themselves. There would appear to be a growing willingness among the American people to bring problems out of the family closet and to seek help.

While Americans are clearly experiencing great difficulty in making lasting marriages and raising children, there is no survey evidence to support the conclusion that the increase in single homes, cohabitation and divorce signal the beginning of the end for the traditional family. The fact is the divorced do not choose divorce because they think the family is unimportant. Nor is there any evidence that the end of the nuclear family is at hand.

The large majority of both men and women, 8 in 10, continue to see marriage, home, and the family as the ideal life for them now and in the future. If anything, there is growing support for the nuclear family.

The importance Americans place on the family stems in considerable measure from the fact that the American people, including young adults, continue to be remarkably traditional in their value system, particularly regarding the importance of family ties.

Second, these same people are highly religious in their world view, and the evidence suggests that the downtrends in religious participation have leveled out, and there would appear to be a new spiritual quest in this country, a very dramatic upturn in interest in bible reading and in adult religious education courses.

I will not comment on the data. We know from the census the divorce rate, and so forth, but I will deal basically with survey data. The lack of a close relationship with parents robs young people of self-esteem. In a survey we conducted for the Robert H. Schuller Ministries, we discovered that while 41 percent of adults who feel very close to both their parents have high self-esteem, fewer who feel less close have high self-esteem.

I need not note that people with low self-esteem have more health problems and problems related to stress than do persons with high self-esteem; are less productive; have a greater number of problems related to alcohol and drug abuse; are less satisfied with many of their life; and are more confused about their moral and ethical standards.

Another term for self-esteem might be one's sense of self-worth. Some people may feel more comfortable with that word.

Some 24 million Americans, or 15 percent of the adult population, report at least one serious instance of physical abuse of children in their neighborhoods. Now, this is based on a study we did for the National Coalition for Children's Justice, an organization headed by Ken Wooden. A similar proportion is recorded for spouse abuse, shockingly high figures indeed.

As further evidence of disruptions in our society and of violence, each year in the last decade, discipline has been cited by parents in this country as the top problem facing the schools in their communities. Hundreds of teachers are physically attacked each month by their students. Thousands of school children are also physically abused. A recent Gallup youth survey indicated that as many as one teenager in five is fearful of bodily injury during school hours.

The problem of alcohol and drug abuse is cited by most parents as being the major difficulty currently faced by youth in their communities. In fact, teenagers themselves name alcohol and drug abuse among the top problems.

What are the forces at work that the public feels are undermining the family? By way of answer here are further findings from the survey we conducted for the White House Conference on Families. Fear of crime is among the most negative effects Americans see on the quality of their family life.

Declining religious, moral, and social standards are other negative effects on the quality of family life in the minds of many, along with conflicts within the family and perceived overemphasis of sex and violence on TV.

One out of four Americans told us that alcohol and drug abuse are major causes, in their estimation, of the high divorce rate in this country. Six out of ten survey respondents listed alcohol and drug abuse among the three things they thought were most harmful to family life.

Looking at the other side, here are some items people call the most positive effects on the quality of their family lives: Interaction between family members; religious beliefs, practices, and organizations; neighbors in the surrounding community; schools and educational programs; one's job.

Evidence that Americans prize the family to a great extent is seen in these findings. Nine in ten Americans, according to the Schuller survey, say their families are very important to their basic sense of worth as a person. Now, this is a far higher proportion than recorded for 10 other items, including one's moral standards, relationship to God or a universal spirit, and close friends.

Eight in ten parents give their relations with their children one of the top three ratings on a 10 point scale indicating a high level of satisfaction with this quality of life. This is the highest rated category of the 13 included in a Gallup survey.

The American people consider the personal aspects of their lives, their family, health, and self-respect, for example, to be far more important than the possession of material goods. As many as 9 in 10 Americans say they would welcome more emphasis on traditional family ties, while a similar proportion favors more respect for authority. Three in four would like to see religious beliefs playing a greater role in people's lives.

On the other hand, only one person in four would like to see more acceptance of sexual freedom, and merely one in eight would welcome more acceptance of marijuana usage.

The traditional role of wife and mother is still perceived as the ideal lifestyle by the great majority of American women, although there has been a sharp increase since 1975 in the percentage of women who regard a fulltime job outside the home as an integral part of this ideal.

Incidentally, men share this view in terms of an ideal lifestyle. Men also overwhelmingly say that marriage with children is the ideal lifestyle for them.

Young people tend to favor more sexual freedom and in general are more favorably disposed to premarital sex, but they remain as traditional as their parents on the subject of extramarital sex.

The vast majority of Americans believe that marriage—the percentage is 9 in 10—believe that marriage is not an outdated institution. According to the Schuller survey, 8 in 10 Americans say that getting a divorce would make them feel very bad about themselves. Only 7 percent say it would make no difference in how they feel about themselves.

Six in ten Americans agree with the statement that a child needs a home with both the father and mother to grow up happily.

We have explored reasons for divorce in great detail. This is available in the White House—sorry—the survey we conducted for the White House Conference on Families. I think this evidence indicates that Americans place prime importance upon marriage and the family, and our studies also show that the divorced segments of the population place as high a premium on family life as do married persons.

What steps would appear called for? Well, first, we should note that Americans themselves are urgently calling for help in their efforts to keep their families together and to raise children with a high sense of self-worth. It is important to note that as many as one-third of the public admits to being inadequately prepared for their present marriages.

Furthermore, while half of all parents feel that they have been very good parents, the other half say that they have only been fairly good parents or worse. What steps might be considered as ways to strengthen marriages and families and thereby spare future generations of children misfortune and grief?

Well, on the basis of the public's beliefs themselves, let me just very briefly note these items. Many Americans feel that television in some respects is a negative impact on the family in terms of violence and sex. Certainly, TV is a major shaper of our lives, and the public feels that the effects are largely negative.

As many as one-third of all Americans say they have experienced alcohol related problems in their families, one-third of all

Americans. Some studies have shown alcohol to be a factor in as many as half of all divorces. The public appears at last ready to take dramatic steps to deal with alcohol abuse, which many consider to be the Nation's No. 1 health problem; 7 in 10, for example, would like to see a national campaign to warn people about the dangers of excessive use of alcohol.

Such a campaign might also encourage parents to talk about the problems of alcohol abuse with their offspring. One of our surveys shows that as many as 4 parents in 10 set no guidelines whatsoever regarding the use of alcohol by their teenage children.

I would suggest that this is one of the most immediate, concrete ways to strengthen families, to encourage parents to talk about the problems of excessive drinking. I can think of nothing more pertinent and more direct and more immediate as a way to help strengthen families in the United States.

Problems confronting families today can likely be traced in some measure to the decline in proportions of Americans who say that religion is very important in their lives: From 75 percent in 1952 to 70 percent in 1965 to 56 percent in our latest surveys.

But I should note that the dramatic downtrends in religious participation that came between the midsixties and the midseventies have now leveled out in the seventies and eighties, and as I indicated earlier, there are signs of a strong surge of interest in religious matters in this country. And religion, indeed, plays a very powerful role in the home according to the public's own testimony.

For example, 45 percent of parents say religion in their homes has strengthened family relationships a great deal; 32 percent say religion has helped their children a great deal in dealing with the problems in their lives. Fewer than 10 percent say religion has not helped the family situation at all, a very important finding, indeed.

There are various steps that could be taken in terms to increase the level of religious commitment in the homes. I do not have time to deal with that.

In fact, I had better ask, Senator, at this point, how much time I have left. I do not want to go over my allotted time.

Senator DENTON. Well, if you could summarize the remainder of your statement, Mr. Gallup, it would help. However, it is powerful, authoritative, and extremely relevant, so I do not want you to feel too cramped. I would ask you to summarize the remainder of your statement if you can because we do have the full statement in writing. I find it absolutely fascinating and very helpful.

Mr. GALLUP. Great. Thank you. OK. I will wind up quickly, then.

Certain steps that seem suggested in terms of how to strengthen the family unit and thereby help a lot of children would be certainly for the clergy to develop a new team effort with parents to increase the level of spiritual commitment in homes. We are seeing such a development, actually in the field of religion. It is a very dramatic development. Parents are now working hand in hand with teachers on major problems facing their youth today. Hopefully, something similar will develop between the clergy of all faiths and people—parents.

Certainly, courses are needed in preparation for marriage, judging by that figure I gave you, that 3 in 10 parents did not feel adequately prepared. And specifically, in terms of governmental action, here are some of the proposals favored by Americans from our study conducted for the White House Conference on Families. A majority of Americans support changes in tax, health, welfare, and housing laws to give greater consideration to families.

Now, details can be found in this study that we did for the White House Conference on Families. Families, including, flex times, sick leave for an employee if a family member is ill—I beg your pardon.

There is significant support for changes in personnel policies at workplaces to help families, including flex time, sick leave for an employee if a family member is ill, more opportunities for part-time employment, and the elimination of mandatory overtime; providing health care assistance for the elderly living at home or with their families, providing assistance to poor families, and taking families into account when enacting laws and making regulations are three priority choices for governmental action to help families.

A majority of Americans support tax credits to individual businesses and community groups to provide child care. A majority also supports direct Government funding of day care centers to help working mothers. Tax credits for families with handicapped children, guaranteed jobs for parents, and programs to enforce child support were three other top choices on Government efforts to help families.

In conclusion, I would like to just note again that the evidence would clearly seem to indicate that Americans prize their families; they want them to work; but they need help. They need help from the Government. They need help from churches and synagogues. And they need help from each other through support groups.

In exploring ways to strengthen the family and to improve the future of our children, we must not concentrate simply on negative factors. There are, of course, many successful families in our Nation, and we must do our very best to tap their experience.

Thank you.

[The report referred to follows:]

ATTITUDES OF THE U.S. PUBLIC
TOWARD MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Testimony given by George Gallup, Jr., President of the Gallup Poll, at hearing by the Senate Subcommittee on Family and Human Services: "Broken Family: Overview and Effect on Children," March 22, 1983, 9:30 a.m., Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C.

The effects of divorce and separation and conflict within marriage are taking a serious toll on children in our nation--and on society as a whole, since a healthy nation is directly related to healthy family life in that nation.

o One out of every two marriages in the United States ends in divorce, with the divorce rate having doubled between 1965 and 1976.

o One out of every eight children lives in a single-parent home. One out of every two black children lives with only one parent.

o More than 500,000 children grow up in foster homes and institutions.

o Lack of parental guidance contributes to the fact that 25 youngsters drop out of high school for every 100 who graduate.

o The lack of a close relationship with parents robs young people of self-esteem. In a Gallup survey conducted for the Robert H. Schuller Ministries, we discovered that while 41% of adults who feel very close to both their parents have high self-esteem, fewer (33%) who feel less close have high self-esteem. And people with low self-esteem, representing 30% of the population, have more health problems and problems related to stress than do persons with high self-esteem, are less productive, have a greater number of problems related to alcohol and drug abuse, are less satisfied with many aspects of their life, and are more confused about their moral and ethical standards.

o Some 24 million Americans, or 15% of the adult population, report at least one serious instance of physical abuse of children in their neighborhoods, based on a Gallup survey. A similar proportion is recorded for spouse abuse.

A Gallup Youth survey reveals that one teen-ager in five is aware of instances of physical abuse of children by parents occurring to someone who was a friend or who lived in the neighborhood.

o Another revealing response relating to the home (as revealed by surveys conducted for the Charles F. Kettering Foundation): each year in the last decade, discipline has been cited by parents in this country as the top problem facing the schools in their communities. Hundreds of teachers are physically attacked each month by their students. Thousands of school children are also physically abused. A recent Gallup Youth Survey indicated that as many as one teen-ager in five is fearful of bodily injury during school hours.

o The problem of alcohol and drug abuse is cited by most parents as being the major difficulty currently faced by youth in their communities. In fact, teen-agers, themselves, name alcohol and drug abuse among the top problems.

Other survey findings give little cause for encouragement:

o More Americans think family life has gotten worse rather than better over the last 15 years, as determined by a Gallup survey conducted for the White House Conference on Families.

o One third of us are dissatisfied with the future facing our families.

What are the forces at work that the public feels are undermining the family? By way of an answer, here are further findings for the survey conducted for the WHCF.

Fear of crime is among the most negative effects Americans see on the quality of their family life. Declining religious, moral, and social standards are other negative effects on the quality of family life in the minds of many, along with conflicts within the family and perceived overemphasis of sex and violence on TV.

One out of four Americans told us that alcohol and drug abuse are major causes, in their estimation, of the high divorce rate in this country. Six out of 10 survey respondents listed alcohol and drug abuse among the three things they thought were most harmful to family life.

Looking at the other side, here are some items people call the most positive effects on the quality of their family lives: interaction between family members; religious beliefs, practices, and organizations; neighbors and the surrounding community; schools and educational programs; one's job.

The broken family causes particular anguish among the populace because Americans prize the family to a great extent. There is ample survey evidence to support this conclusion:

o Nine in 10 Americans, according to the Schuller survey, say their families are "very important" to their basic sense of worth as a person, a far higher proportion than recorded for 10 other items, including one's moral standards, relationship to God or a universal spirit, and close friends.

o Eight in 10 parents (81%) give their relations with their children one of the top three ratings on a 10-point scale, indicating a high level of satisfaction with this quality of life --the highest-rated category of the 13 included in a Gallup survey.

Other aspects of their lives given very high ratings by the public are their family life (79% highly satisfied), their relations with other people (79%), their marriage (78%), their health (70%), their housing (69%), their personal life (68%), and their community as a place to live (67%).

Somewhat lower ratings are accorded their job (64%), their standard of living (57%), the way they spend their free time (56%), housework (54% from housewives), and their household income (43%).

The American people consider the personal aspects of their lives--their family, health, and self-respect, for example--to be far more important than the possession of material goods. Blacks and whites share this general assessment but blacks place more importance on status-related social goals and such material possessions as a high income, a nice home, car, and other belongings.

In a recent Gallup survey eight in 10 participants (82%) assigned one of the top two positions on an 11-point scale to the importance of their family life. Similar proportions indicated that their physical health (81%), self-respect (79%), and personal satisfaction or happiness (77%) were about equally important to them.

On the other hand, fewer than one fourth the respondents (22%) said that social recognition was very important in their lives (choosing one of the top two positions on the scale). Other assets earning relatively low importance ratings include: having enough leisure time (36%), having a high income (37%), and having a nice home, car, and other belongings (39%).

As many as nine in 10 Americans say they would welcome "more emphasis on traditional family ties," while a similar proportion favors "more respect for authority." Three in four would like to see religious beliefs "playing a greater role in people's lives."

On the other hand, only one peron in four would like to "see more acceptance of sexual freedom" and merely one in eight would welcome "more acceptance of marijuana usage."

The proportion favoring greater acceptance of marijuana use has declined from 20% in 1978 to 13% in the current survey, the most pronounced change recorded between the two surveys, with the decline sharpest among young adults (18-29 years old).

The traditional role of wife and mother is still perceived as the ideal lifestyle by the great majority of American women, although there has been a sharp increase since 1975 in the percentage of women who regard a full-time job outside the home as an integral part of this ideal.

The following table shows the trend:

IDEAL LIFESTYLE
(Views of women)

	1975	1980	1982
Married with children	76%	74%	79%
With full-time job	32	33	40
With no full-time job	44	41	39
Married with no children	9	10	7
With full-time job	6	6	5
With no full-time job	3	4	2
Unmarried with full-time job	9	8	6
Not sure	6	8	8
	100%	100%	100%

While young people tend to favor more sexual freedom and in general are more favorably disposed to pre-marital sex, they remain as traditional as their parents on the subject of extra-marital sex. That they feel so strongly about the sanctity of marriage vows can be an unequivocal endorsement of the family unit. Even though some young people may live together out of wedlock, they tend to do so in the belief that this is a way to test the relationship and avoid future problems that might lead to divorce.

o The vast majority (9 in 10) of Americans, according to a survey on human values conducted by the Gallup Organization for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, believe that marriage is not an outdated institution.

o According to the Schuller survey, 8 in 10 Americans say that "getting a divorce" would make them feel "very bad" about themselves. Only 7% say it would make "no difference" in how they feel about themselves.

o The same survey shows 6 in 10 Americans agreeing with the statement that a child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily.

o Here are the views of Americans on divorce, based on a Gallup survey conducted for CHRISTIANITY TODAY: divorce should be avoided under any circumstances, 10%; divorce should be avoided except in an extreme situation, 40%; divorce is painful but preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage, 45%.

It would appear to be clear from the survey data presented here that Americans place prime importance upon marriage and the family. And our studies also show that the divorced segments of the population place as high a premium on family life as do married persons. Those who choose divorce do not do so because they feel the family is unimportant.

In short, the trend toward broken families does not, for the most part, spring from less regard for the institutions of marriage and the family, but from many other factors that are conspiring to undermine family life in this nation.

Americans today are urgently calling for help in their efforts to keep their families together and to raise children with a high sense of self-worth.

In this regard, it is important to note that as many as one third of the public admits to being inadequately prepared for their present marriages. Furthermore, while half of all parents feel that they have been "very good" parents, the other half say they have been only "fairly good" or worse.

What steps might be considered as ways to strengthen marriages and families and thereby spare future generations of children misfortune and grief? In considering possible steps, it is of course important to bear in mind what the public has to say about positive and negative influences on the family, since the parents themselves are logically the starting point for any legitimate discussion of how to deal with problems affecting families.

o Many Americans feel that television, in some respects, has a negative impact on the family. Majorities, for example, think TV harms family life by overemphasizing violence and sex. In this regard, two out of three Americans believe there is a relationship between violence shown on television programs and the nation's high crime rate. Although the public is against a proposal that all television programs which show violence be taken off television entirely, they favor a proposal that all television programs with violence be shown only after 10 o'clock at night, after most children's bedtime.

As many as one third of all Americans say they have experienced alcohol-related problems in their families. Some studies have shown alcohol to be a factor in as many as half of all divorces.

The public appears ready to take dramatic steps to deal with alcohol abuse, which many consider to be the nation's number-one health problem. Seven in 10, for example, would like to see a national campaign to warn people about the dangers of excessive use of alcohol. Such a campaign might also encourage parents to talk about the problems of alcohol abuse with their offspring. One of our surveys shows that as many as four parents in 10 set no guidelines whatsoever regarding the use of alcohol by their teen-age children.

o Problems confronting families today can likely be traced in some measure to the decline in the proportions of Americans who say that religion is "very important" in their lives--from 75% in 1952 to 70% in 1965 to 56% in our latest surveys.

What is the impact of religion on the home? Forty-five percent of parents say religion in their homes has strengthened family relationships "a great deal." Thirty-two percent say religion has helped their children "a great deal" in dealing with the problems in their lives. Fewer than 10 percent say religion has not helped the family situation at all.

Clergy of all faiths need to build upon this base and to increase the level of religious commitment. What may be required is a new "team effort" between parents and clergy to deepen spiritual values in the home. Parents would appear to be receptive--more than eight in 10 want their children to have religious training.

o Given the fact that one third of Americans say they were inadequately prepared for marriage, and that fact that half of all parents say they could do a better job of parenting, special courses for parents should be offered. The public, we find, is receptive to such a plan.

Large majorities of Americans also support sex education in schools with parental consent and courses in marriage and family life, alcohol, and drug abuse and parenting in the schools.

o Rearing children may be the most vital role a person can exercise in life, yet preparation for this task is greatly lacking. Adults plunge into marriage and raise children with the advance knowledge required to do a satisfying job. The learning is basically by trial and error.

o Not only should there by courses in preparation for marriage and childrearing, but instruction and counseling should come after marriage as well. Families are in great need of outside help or counseling. In ths past, this function was often filled by priests or pastors, or informally, by grandparents. Now, with fewer grandparents in the home, high mobility, and somewhat less attachment to the church, many parents are left on their own.

One of the most remarkable and fast-growing trends in the U.S. today is the self-help movement. It is to be hoped that parents will increasingly become part of this movement and share their insights about childrearing with other parents. Certainly a key trait of a healthy family is admitting to and seeking help with problems.

o Greater efforts to open up communication among family members are desperately needed. In Dolores Curran's valuable book, TRAITS OF A HEALTHY FAMILY, the number-one trait found in healthy families, according to her survey of 551 family counselors, is "communicating and listening." One respondent said, "...without communication, you don't know one another. If you don't know one another, you don't care about one another, and that's what the family ballgame is all about."

A lack of caring undermines a child's self-esteem, and if a person does not like himself he can hardly like other people.

Nothing is more important than a child's having the undivided attention of the parent. Columnist William Shannon writes, "A young child needs a one-to-one emotional relationship with a living adult if the child is to grow into a stable, self-confident person."

As you know, there has been a national campaign in which people are asked over television if they know where their children are, and if they have hugged their children that day. Another question might be, "Have you listened to your child today--really listened?"

If more Americans could be persuaded to carve out of their three or four hours of television viewing each day a period of five minutes at bedtime and use this time to ask their child a simple question--"How did things go today?"--and listen, the results in terms of individual families and society as a whole could, I believe, be highly salutary.

Americans prize their families; they want them to work, but they need help--help from the government, help from their churches and synagogues, and help from each other, through self-help groups.

In exploring ways to strengthen the family, and improve the future for our children, we must not concentrate simply on negative factors. There are many successful families in our nation, and we must do our very best to tap their experience.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Gallup. Before we ask questions, we will introduce the second witness on this panel, Dr. Amitai Etzioni, Director, Center for Policy Research and university professor at George Washington University right here in town.

Welcome to you.

Mr. ETZIONI. Thank you, Senator.

Senator DENTON. We will have your opening statement, if you will, sir.

Mr. ETZIONI. Senator Denton, Senator Grassley, let me first of all congratulate you on this very important hearing. I believe there is no more urgent, more important assignment before us than to ask the questions you are raising today.

Let me also say, I brought my wife along, not only for moral support, but in case you want to know how we raise our five children; she can help me answer those questions.

But to turn to my statement, I believe the family is under attack, and indeed according to my calculations, published in Science on April 29, 1977, if we continue to dismantle the American family at the accelerating pace we have been doing since 1965, there will not be a single American family left by the year 2008.

I would like to deviate here from the statement and explain that since then, from 1977 until 1982, the trend continued not only in the same general direction, but it continued to accelerate. This is an important point. It is not only the family behaviorally continues to decline, but at an ever rapid pace.

Now, in 1982 we had a pause, as you reported yourself earlier. We are not quite sure yet if the reason is that spiritual revival we are hoping for or if it is due to the recession or some combination of the two. But with this one exception, the trend has been holding for a very unfortunate, very long period of time.

Senator DENTON. Sir, just so we understand your point here, between 1965 and 1977 the pace of dismantling the family was accelerating so greatly that, if this trend continues, there will not be a single American family left by the year 2008. Is that what you said?

Mr. ETZIONI. Yes, sir.

Senator DENTON. And that since that time, between 1977 and 1982, the acceleration of dismantling was even greater than you had previously anticipated in 1977. Is that correct?

Mr. ETZIONI. That is correct. To put it precisely, if the trend would have continued as it was at the end of 1981, the critical year, which is kind of a fictional thing; nobody can imagine such a society. I just use it to highlight the point—would be the year 2007.

Senator DENTON. I do not mean to intrude here, but it is so important for understanding for me. Is that based on divorce rate?

Mr. ETZIONI. Yes.

Senator DENTON. OK.

Mr. ETZIONI. And deferred marriages.

Senator DENTON. And what, sir?

Mr. ETZIONI. Deferred marriages. People who decide either to marry later or not marry at all.

Senator DENTON. I see. Thank you.

Mr. ETZIONI. I frankly believe that some force will set in to reverse the course and save the American family before this time. But we should not disregard the trend that has been going on for more than a decade and a half. We dare not allow the family to collapse. There never was a society throughout all of history—and many variations society exhibited—without a family as the central unit for launching the education of children, for character formation, and as the moral agent of society.

There are many forces which propel the destruction of the family. Many of them are very difficult to change, economic and technological in nature. But I believe there is one which deserves special attention because it is easiest to change and confront, and that is the ideology which attacks the family.

If I may deviate here for a moment, let me just read one out of the unfortunate many quotes you could use; that is from a Newsweek story. The Newsweek story tells us about stuck marriages.

Senator DENTON. What kind of marriages?

Mr. ETZIONI. Stuck.

Senator DENTON. Stuck marriages?

Mr. ETZIONI. Right.

And it says that people said these are the American golden watch marriages, quote, "Short on excitement and fulfillment, but long on security." So when Newsweek calls those marriages stuck, that is obviously a negative term; you're stuck in the mud.

Now, the implication is, the value judgment which hides behind the supposed straight reporting, the people who allege to separate facts from editorializing, is who said that security is worse than excitement? Is it wrong for a person to choose security over excitement?

In effect, I think just as strong a case can be made that excitement will self-destruct. Nobody can have 50 years of excitement. And, as you pointed out earlier, there is quite a possibility to combine security with excitement, and the implication that anybody who lasts in a 50-year, golden-watch marriage never knew excitement, is by itself not a very accurate reporting.

But I just seek to illustrate here how so much of our language, as we talk about reconstituted families, as they compare the first marriage to high school and the second marriage to college, and see the first marriage as a dry run.

As we talk now about no-fault divorce which has a legal meaning, but as a different sociological signal, much or our culture has gone in the direction of promoting the antifamily forces. And that is, I believe, one thing we need to confront. I say that simply not as an ethical issue. I am saying this as a technical issue.

If you had any other—if you would promote drinking and driving, you would have to confront the mentality which is behind it and not just statistics.

Now, I would like to go specifically to the question of the effect on children. And I would like first to say that I have never seen in my total professional and personal experience a single instance—not one—in which a child which was affected by divorce did not suffer in one form or another to one degree or another.

Sometimes the effects are deeper; sometimes they are shorter lived, but the notion that you can have a divorce without an effect on the children, I think, simply has no support in any evidence.

Let me just give here one example. I deliberately chose that one because on the face of it you would think it is not problematic. This happened last year not too far from here. A couple was waiting, so to speak, for their last child to leave the nest on the assumption that after that divorce would be "harmless." They had an 18-year-old girl, a senior in high school. Well, they could not quite wait until she left.

So a few months before the end of the year they broke up their family and each one moved in with somebody else. The daughter first of all went into a fairly long depression, expressed in crying spells and just sitting in her room.

And then instead of going to college as she planned, she took off to Colorado with a bunch of skydivers, and while I would fight for the right of people who want to do that, I think it was an unmistakable psychological signal when under those circumstances you engage in high risk behavior, rather than continue a normal course of life.

She has been since then returned and she is collecting her life, and I believe next year she will go to college. Not all these things have to end in tragedy. But I think I used this unmelodramatic case to suggest that there is a cost for everybody.

Now, the social science problem, as distinct from the ethical problem, is that these findings have not been highlighted. There are studies. There are important studies. We just heard one this morning. There are other studies done by psychoanalysts, by physicians, of groups of teenagers. But we do not have as of this moment the kind of national study, the kind of one we had on private schools, the kind we had on integration, which has sufficient body of evidence, sufficient magnitude, sufficient strength to give us the scientific ammunition we need in this battle over the public opinion.

And I would like to recommend to you for your consideration that a science court would be set up that will include some of the highest ranking scientists in this country, be given the backup necessary to conduct over a 2-year period a study of sufficient magnitude and validity so we will have once and for all the body of evidence needed to show what divorce does to the children affected, psychologically and physically.

I believe that would give a pause to people. Some people are religious and in that sense have an easier time of it. Their religion gives them a direction, gives them an answer. But there are a large segment of Americans who are secular. I would like if I may just for a second to comment on the important data we heard this morning.

The data reports on what Americans hope for, aspire to, what we call attitudes. But the road to Hell is often paved with good intentions. So 8 or 9 out of 10 Americans may say they love marriage on their way to the divorce court.

And so therefore we need to help them, speak to their aspirations and hopes, and not just rest on the fact that they pay lipservice to marriage, but then are unable to maintain the institution. I believe a sufficient body of data on what the effect is on children will give them one more argument to slow them down in their rush to divorce.

I will just cite here one item of data, by Dr. Lynch, who is quite well known. It basically shows that people who are lonely, who are cut off from one another, tend to suffer a large variety of ill consequence such as drinking excessively. Here alcohol is a cause, as has been pointed out, but it is also the consequence of breaking homes and broken homes.

And the same holds for driving at excessive speeds, of suicidal driving, and such.

Senator DENTON. I was going to ask that question later, but you are stating that it is your opinion from your experience that alcohol abuse and even driving too fast, and that sort of thing, are, while some could postulate them as reasons for divorce, often manifestations of disaffection with the breaking up or the breakdown of a family.

Is that what you are saying?

Mr. ETZIONI. Yes, sir. The evidence is fairly strong; correlating people who are lonely and comparing them with people who are in meaningful relationships, which is basically the case in marriage. And what it is is that when people are on their own and do not have meaningful relationships, they are not hooked into a family or in a group or such thing, they tend to engage in drug abuse or in alcohol more than other people by very significant amounts.

For instance, cirrhosis of the liver is, seven times higher among people who are cut off than people who are in marriage. This is not to say that there are no drug abuse and alcohol abuse among married people. All we are saying is that is much higher in people who do not have lasting, meaningful relationships.

Now, other than the science court, I would like to briefly list some other suggestions. I am not a lawyer, and I am not absolutely clear to what degree a Federal model law can or cannot affect the State laws. But if we could have a model law which would call for a 30-day cooling off period, which would make counseling available to those who want it, available to people who file for divorce, if not earlier, either from clergy or from psychologists.

And we would not allow mail order divorces. I believe it will have a double significance. It will allow a cooling-off period to avoid divorce on impulse. It also would send a signal that the lawmakers of this country are concerned rather than condone this particular sociological trend.

And, finally, as already has been mentioned, I very much applaud the idea that we will develop and teach in our schools and colleges–how to relate to one another better. Studies show that the difference between successful and unsuccessful marriages is not that people in successful marriages do not fight, do not have arguments, do not have conflicts.

The difference is, the studies show–there is good data on that—that people in successful marriages know how to fight. They know how to resolve the conflict in such a way which will not destroy the relationship. Often in the unsuccessful marriages, they fight in ways which are destructive of the marriage. And you can teach people, by case examples, how to fight properly. And that is but one of the lessons we should include in such a curriculum. Indeed, I would say to go beyond this here, that I would favor sex education to be folded in family education so it will not be taught as a mechanical, biological subject, but it will be taught part of human values and how to relate in the broader context. This in it, I would see a place for sex education.

Let me close here by saying it is in part an issue of social forces beyond anybody's control; in part it is in the heart and minds of men and women. And therefore it is so important that our lawmakers and our leaders, our public leaders strike the right note to correct what has been a flood in the wrong direction.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Etzioni and responses to questions asked by Senator Denton follow:]

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES

BY AMITAI ETZIONI

MARCH 22, 1983

The family is under attack. Indeed, according to my calculations, (published in Science April 29, 1977), if we continue to dismantle our American family at the accelerating pace we have been doing so since 1965, there will not be a single American family left by the year 2008. While I frankly believe that some force will set in to reverse the course and save the American family before this time, we should not disregard that the trend has been going on for more than a decade and a half. (It slowed down recently but this seems due largely to the recession and not yet the kind of revival I am looking for.)

We dare not allow the family to collapse. There never was a society, throughout all of history and numerous variations societies exhibit, without a family as the central unit for launching the education of children, for character formation, the social basis of ethical life.

There are many forces which propel the destruction of the family; many of them very difficult to change or control. But there is one which deserves special attention because it is easiest to change and reverse: the ideology which denigrates the family.

Arguments are advanced which not merely approve of divorce, but extol it. E.g., call first marriage a dry run; compare it to high school, second marriage to college. Others foster the notion that single parents can bring up children as well as two, while the fact is that in our society, with both parents often working outside the home, they can barely discharge their parental duties. Others argue that there is no evidence that divorce harms the children so often involved.

Let me say first of all that in all my professional and personal experience I have never seen a single child, not one, who did not suffer, in one way or another, psychically or psychosomatically, to one degree or another, from divorce. Recently, I came upon a situation where the parents of an 18 year old girl divorced just as she was completing her senior year, presumably on the assumption that now she no longer needed the home they had provided. Each parent picked up with a new partner almost immediately. The girl first went through a prolonged period of depression, crying spells, withdrawal. She then refused to continue with her plans to go to college. She left the area in which her parents live and engaged in what is, by our standards, hazardous (i.e., suicidal) behavior: she went into sky diving in Colorado with a fast set.

Younger children tend to suffer more. Dr. James Lynch's data should be applied here. "If you look, for example, at people who are likely to be statistically lonely--single, widowed, divorced individuals--they have death rates under age 70 that are anywhere from two to 10 times higher than do married individuals....If you look at just, say, one category--divorced white men under age 70 in the U.S.--they die from heart disease death rates double that of married men, lung cancer death rates that are double, cirrhosis of the liver death rates that are seven times higher, suicide rates that are five times higher, automobile accident death rates that are six times higher, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Children, who either are lonely when they return from school to an empty nest, or because they feel lonely because they cannot relate to their step-parents, are to be expected to exhibit similar syndromes.

While there are several studies on the subject, they do not have the scope to do the job. What we need, and I strongly recommend that you consider initiating or supporting, is a Science Court on the family and the effects of its demise on children. The "Court" to involve a set of the country's best scientists, backed up with the needed data collection and analysis apparatus. They are to form, within two years, a data base able to demonstrate convincingly to all, the effects of dismantling the family. By making the study large enough, sufficiently backed up with data and stature, its findings will not be ignored by the healing professions and the public at large. It could help set the stage for a revitalization of the family, especially for secular Americans.

Second, we need a federal model law to encourage states to slow down the rush to divorce. A 30-day cooling-off period should be required. Counseling by clergy or qualified psychologists should be available. Mail-order divorce should be prohibited.

Thirdly, the Department of Education should encourage educators to develop courses on human relations, to help people learn how to relate better, above all, how to work out differences without dismantling relationships and to realize the great social value of mutuality and family.

We went too far in promoting ego over relationships and institutions. The time is overdue to stress the need to revitalize both.

Amitai Etzioni is University Professor, THe George Washington University, Washington, D.C.; and Director, Center for Policy Research. For additional data, see his An Immodest Agenda (McGraw-Hill, 1983).

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DENTON TO DR. ETZIONI

1. What has been the greater factor contributing to the high level of divorce in this country -- the relaxation of divorce laws or the change in values and attitudes toward marriage?

   Regarding question one, values and laws work on one another, "interact." Change in values leads to change in laws, but also is egged on by them, etc. But, if I had to choose I would say values are more at issue.

2. You said in your statement that you believe some force will arise to reverse the course of family disintegration and save the American family. What force do you think this will be? Has it already arisen?

   Regarding question two, the force has not yet arisen. It would be a spiritual (religious and/or secular) revival of the kind the Church had in the Counter-Reformation, and the U.S.A. had in the Jacksonian era (although these revivals, of course, were in other areas).

Senator **Denton**. Thank you, Professor Etzioni.

Well, I will begin with Mr. Gallup. In your polls, could you give us some idea of the Government policies which Americans have identified as adversely or positively affecting the family life?

Mr. **Gallup**. Senator, I am afraid I do not have more details in front of me here.

Senator **Denton**. You mentioned some when you went through your opening statement in general terms.

Mr. **Gallup**. That is right. In the overall national finding, I do not have details, unfortunately.

Senator **Denton**. All right. Do you believe there is an increasing problem with self-esteem among young people today or is that leveling off also?

Mr. **Gallup**. Pardon me, sir?

Senator **Denton**. You mentioned that——

Mr. **Gallup**. The last part I did not hear.

Senator **Denton**.—Do you notice any leveling off in the problem of low self-esteem among young people today, less of the complete dropout trend.

Mr. **Gallup**. I would suggest that the—we do not have trend data on self-esteem, which we base on several—two basic scales, actually. And about 30 percent of the populace could be categorized as—in these terms, of our terms of these scales, as low self-esteem.

I would suggest that that level is not going to change much because as long as we have the serious problem of youth unemployment in this country and this has been a problem with us for a long time, and we have not really been able to deal with this over the years.

And I think as long as we—in fact, the figure is, of course, as high as 50 percent among some races, younger persons. And until that situation has improved—and it has been with us a long time—I think we are going to have—continue to have one segment of the populace, a very large segment, who have low self-esteem.

Senator **Denton**. Thank you, Mr. Gallup. Your statement is so comprehensive that questions really would be redundant and I apologize for the fact that in my opening statement we anticipated some of your statistics. After all, you are rather a prolific source thereof.

Professor Etzioni, you mentioned sex education as being necessary and emphasized that it should be in the context of some sort of values orientation. This is a subject I have been interested in since I was the cochairman of the Alabama Governor's Commission on Children and the Family, which had something to do with these White House Conferences on the Family.

And the best system of sex education I have seen—and I too am for sex education—particularly in today's environment, which surprises some of my critics.

I would ask your comment about one particular form of sex education as to what you think of its efficacy.

In Tidewater, Va., the Tidewater Conference on the Family worked up a proposal after some years. The conference proposed that sex education be handled as follows: In grade school and high school, first you take a look at the religious makeup of the class in a given school and work with that group. You use the principal of the school, the teachers involved in that grade level, the parents involved in that grade, a doctor or two, and clergymen representing the various denominational groups into which that class may be broken, as those denominations bear on attitudes toward sex education. For example, the Jews, the Catholics, maybe some of the fundamentalists, and Protestants. Might have a slightly different preference as to what values their children should be taught, and how explicit the details of sex should be.

They get together. They establish a curriculum involving, perhaps, four classes a year which the parents attend with their children. How would you react to that kind of an approach?

I have seen other approaches, the extreme being there is a family of rather conservative parents who go over and screen the textbooks which go into the schools. Now, that is an approach which is advocated in my State. I find the former, frankly, more attractive to me.

How would you comment on the first one?

Mr. Etzioni. Senator, if I may, I just for a moment want to go to one premise and then to the particular suggestion. The premise is as important as the program. And the premise is that family education has a place in our schools, and that the notion that all we have to worry about is teaching people how to read and write in a world in which about half the families no longer can discharge their duty as moral educators. That is as dear to me as any of the specifics to follow.

Now, yes, in the best of all worlds, the churches, synagogues, neighborhoods, and families would take care of it, but in present day America they do not, and therefore, first of all, we need to worry about that, establish that premise.

Senator Denton. I agree with that. I mean, that is part of the underlying assumption of this.

Go ahead.

Mr. Etzioni. I just wanted to emphasize it a bit more. Now, as to the specifics of the program, what I like best about it is that it involves the community and the parents in their effort on the obvious grounds that they need as much education often as their children and on the grounds that if they do it together, it will contribute to the family and to the continuation of the process at home.

Now, what we need to balance that with is the concern that we will teach everything but what in the end the child needs to know. And so we also want to be sure that we will not turn the curriculum into some hazy, foggy rhetoric without in the end bringing it down to specifics. So, with that one concern in mind, I would say that program is very welcome

Senator Denton. Thank you, sir. I take no exception with anything you said about that.

You offered some statistics on page 2 of your written statement which you did not bring out in your oral testimony, and for the witnesses here today, I thought they might be worth hearing.

"Younger children tend to suffer more," you begin. "Dr. James Lynch's data should be applied here."

And then you offer those statistics. Am I correct that you did not read them?

Mr. ETZIONI. That is right. If I may, I will just read them now, sir.

Dr. Lynch from the University of Maryland compared single divorced and widowed individuals to married individuals, and the comparison was done in various categories. The statistics here we have are from white males under the age of 70. And across the board the death rates in the people who are not married, single, widowed, or divorced are 2 to 10 times higher, depending on the married individuals.

And the differences are due to they are twice as likely—people who are not married—to die from heart attack. They are twice as likely to die from lung cancer, which means they are smoking more. They are seven times more likely to die from cirrhosis of the liver, which means they drink much more. And the suicide rates are five times higher. And fatal car accidents are six times higher.

I want to emphasize this is not 6 percent or 60 percent. It is six times higher. I mean, these are very striking differences.

Senator DENTON. So, the typical television role model of the miserable married slob is not necessarily that true. If I get this, these men under 70, who are white, have either been divorced or never married.

Mr. ETZIONI. That is right. The statistics combine all three categories. But the category of those who have never been married is relatively small compared to the divorced and widowed, in that order.

Senator DENTON. And the unmarried ones are twice as likely to die of heart disease, twice as likely to die of lung cancer, seven times more likely to die of cirrhosis of the liver, five times more likely to commit suicide, six times more likely to die in an automobile accident. That is consoling for the old married slob.

What would you suggest are the most serious and most lasting effects of family breakdown on children? And then perhaps a separate question: the most serious and lasting effects on the future of our society as a whole.

Mr. ETZIONI. The child is likely to have at least a series of psychological problems; likely, not necessarily, it will translate into psychosomatic problems. The specific outlet I find difficult to predict. If it would turn into asthma or ulcer or drug abuse, I do not believe social science have developed yet the models which can tell you that if you are under stress exactly how it is going to express itself.

Now, the big thing here, moving on to the question what it will do for society; more is at stake here than the loss of man hours or work time or efficiency in the military, although these are not unimportant things.

But, first of all, we know that children imitate their parents. If the parents smoke cigarettes, the children are more likely to smoke cigarettes. If one parent is an alcoholic, their children are 35 times more likely to be an alcoholic. And if both parents are alcoholics, the children are 400 times more likely to be an alcoholic than if they do not have alcoholic parents. The same holds for divorce.

If the children see their parents go through one marriage breakup after another, and as they often tend to do between marriages, go through rotating partners, they will tend to emulate this in their lives. And so we are going to see a repetition of this problem being repeated with one generation inflicting it on the next one. But in the end, there is no substitute for the family that I know of to provide for the moral anchoring of children and of grownups. They are each other's keepers in that sense. And if we keep dismantling the cell which throughout human history was the source of our ethical upbringing and enforcement in society, I do not see how the society could return to a higher level of ethicality and morality for generations to come.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, sir. Do you agree with the respondents to Mr. Gallup's polls, that the principal ways that Government could help the institution of the family would be through tax rearrangements, housing laws, and welfare payments that accommodate more of the family and take care of the elderly at home. Or do you have some other slant on this?

Mr. ETZIONI. I would say that would be my second favorite approach. And the problem is the obvious one. We talk about very large amounts of money, and to be realistic, in the years to come, if you talk, for instance, about Government supported child care centers on a large scale, I do not see the money being available, nor would I necessarily favor it on the grounds that that would lead to bureaucratization and institutionalization of the bringing up of children of the kind we see in nursing homes, rather than keep it in the family.

If we then talk about paying parents for doing their duty, that worries me again for many reasons. I would rather see the Government use its power as an agenda setter, the power of the pulpit, because the Government does have the power to call the Nation to attention, to focus an issue. We have done that in the early seventies about the environment and the early sixties about social issues.

And what you are doing here and what I would hope the science court would do and what the President is trying occasionally to do, if we can call attention—and that would be my first priority item.

Now, flex time has been mentioned, and I think that should be emphasized. It does not add, depending on how it is done, to the cost, but allows both parents to participate in bringing up the children more effectively.

Here is another one of those ideological balloons I think we need to puncture. There is a new phrase making the rounds known as quality time. And that suggests that if you spend 5 good minutes with your children between work and your date, you can make up for the education they are not given. Actually, the latest twist, Senator, is quality phone calls.

Senator DENTON. Quality what?

Mr. ETZIONI. Phone calls.

Senator DENTON. Phone calls.

Mr. ETZIONI. That is when you do not have the time to stop at home and change your shirt and talk to your child, so you just give them a real good phone call. Well, I would like to say both from my studies and from my own experience, quality time, sir, occurs within quantity time. So, if you are around at some unpredictable moment, there is an opening that suddenly, just before they fall asleep or while you go fishing or—you cannot predict exactly when.

It suddenly happens and there is an opening. And if you are not around, you just cannot do your parenting. That notion that you can say to the child, Jimmy, now let's sit down and relate because my date is coming, is just one of those ideologies we have to try to cover some very serious social problems.

And I see a role for our public leaders to remove these tissues so we can see things what they really are.

Senator **Denton**. You would maintain that the child's most dire needs occur at random times, not that someone can read the mind of the child and figure out the times at which these needs will be arising; is that the general idea?

Mr. **Etzioni**. Precisely. If the parent is there, then the parent can relate. That does not mean to me that women should stay home. It means to me that we need more people to do parenting.

And as to those who say that single parents can do it, I say to you I would rather see three parents do it than one. Anybody who brought up children knows that you are always in need of more time. It is a hell of a job and you cannot do it well when you are exhausted physically and psychologically.

Senator **Denton**. You have said that the fact is that in our society with both parents often working outside the home, the parents can barely discharge their parental duties. You do not say that they cannot. But you say that they can barely. And I just mention that because you state that as a fact, not as an opinion, nor as someone else's opinion. Is that correct?

Mr. **Etzioni**. Yes, sir.

Senator **Denton**. Mr. Gallup, do you have any further things to add before we thank you for your testimony?

Mr. **Gallup**. No. I just want to note as a followup to what the professor said, that in terms of—I certainly agree. I actually agree with everything he said. I think it was very insightful. In terms of the—I know in my written remarks I propose that parents do set aside some sort of time. Now, I did it somewhat cynically. I suggested that parents consider taking 5 minutes out of their 3 or 4 hours of television viewing. And I certainly agree that the time cannot be orchestrated, and so forth, but bedtime is the logical time.

But I think it is important to give the public reminders of this sort of thing because some people do not even give their kids 5 minutes. That would be a big advancement in some cases.

But I have no further comments. Thank you.

Senator **Denton**. Well, in case it was not heard, you did agree with what Dr. Etzioni said. I consider that important for the record. I want to thank you both for your extremely valuable, authoritative opinion and set of findings which you expressed this morning.

They will be extremely useful to the subcommittee in its work. We are appreciative, Mr. Gallup, of your solicitation for any requests about what we might ask about through your polls. May I congratulate you for your own individual initiative in that direction. I think it is helping our society.

I wish the Government could better set the agenda, Dr. Etzioni. If you take on ecology or more welfare, you can set the agenda because it will be carried out by the media. Those are popular issues for the media. But the Lichter-Rothman polls show that the national media at the elite level, at the top of the television networks, do not have the same values as those which we have been discussing.

I hope that time changes; I hope they take that leadership. But the problem is they will not pass through this agenda. They have not been passing through this agenda. They have only made fun of it. We got a full cartoon out of "Doonesbury" on the adolescent family life bill after such radical conservatives as Kennedy and Metzenbaum voted for it.

So it was not put out there in a manner of promoting accuracy or objectivity. I hope that changes. I do not want this to be a liberal-conservative or Democratic-Republican fight. I am just interested in trying to get some happiness and to promote the general welfare.

I think that is a liberal aim as well as a conservative one. I am a child of divorced parents. In the seventh grade they broke up. I am very humble about the needs of single parents, and all that sort of thing. But I believe what you all had to say was substantive. I believe that the Government does have to address itself to this agenda, and the Nation does if it is to save itself. I will go that far personally, and I agree with you both on that.

Thank you very much.

Mr. ETZIONI. More power to you.

Senator DENTON. We may have written questions for you gentlemen, as you know, and we hope that you will answer them in writing within 10 days.

We would now like to welcome a distinguished judge from the great city of Birmingham, Ala., Judge Joe Barnard. Are you here, Your Honor? And Dr. Peter Wallace, of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Would you proceed first, Judge.

STATEMENTS OF HON. JOE G. BARNARD, ALABAMA CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE, BIRMINGHAM, ALA., AND PETER D. WALLACE, MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

Mr. BARNARD. Senator, thank you very much for allowing a judge's input into your consideration and your deliberation of this very important subject.

Now, few divisions of the courts in this country have had such an increase in case load as those that are devoted to domestic relations, certainly over the past 10 years. Divorce has become an important aspect of American family life.

In that connection, I would substantiate your figures there. In our own Birmingham, Ala., jurisdiction, we have in the last year come down from about 7,400 case filings to last year's, 1982, 6,600, which shows somewhat of an improvement. About 17 percent of the total filings in the State of Alabama are done in the Birmingham area.

It is becoming increasingly easy to obtain a divorce in America today due to the no fault concept that has been adopted by almost all legislatures. Both the husbands and wives are now considered capable and able to be financially independent of the other. So there is not the dependency concept that has existed in the past.

The idea that families will stay together for the benefit of the children has somewhat changed of late. The idea there being advanced is that, well, rather than keeping the children in this hostile environment, it is better for us or better for them to split up or us to split up and let them start a new type of existence.

People generally when they think of divorce cannot appreciate the hostility, the enmity, the hatred that goes on. Now, my background comes from about 20 years in the criminal procedure business, and after that 20 years experience and training, I was assigned to domestic relations division, and I repeatedly said, I now find where the real evil of society is, where the hatred, where the ugliness is.

Things go on there that most folks do not really understand. We hear about wife beatings and abuse. We hear of child abuse. But very rarely does the American public come face to face with where the rubber meets the road, so to speak, of the actual hatred and enmity that is exhibited in the household.

Now, whether it is better for a child to have the benefit of a home life under those circumstances or whether it is better for the home to break up and be away from that sort of situation, I do not hazard a guess or venture an opinion. I would let my learned colleagues give better expertise on that.

I can only say that this is what we see happening. If it were not so very serious in its nature and the consequence so tragic, some of these situations would be very funny within the family: the pouring of glasses of iced tea on each other, followed quickly by the pouring of a pitcher of iced tea on the other. Somewhere in the nature of the hearings this seems rather funny, if it were, as I say, not so tragic, because children are involved in most divorce cases.

Also there we have had in the last year a new and an unheralded use for the new product Superglue, used by a woman who figured that her husband was being a little unfaithful and took self-help measures there. I do not know of any punitive decree that I could have written that would have sufficed as well as her action with the Superglue. The pain must have been hideous.

It is becoming, as I say, increasingly easy to obtain a divorce because of the no fault. The social and the moral stigma that normally has attached to divorce has gone. And divorce in America today has become almost as common as marriage. Children are involved and are affected by these divorce cases.

The new thought and attitude toward divorce has come about very suddenly, and our court system and laws are traditionally creatures of reaction; that is, the circumstances of society change and demand revision of law and law follows slowly and finally.

Unfortunately, our courts have not been able to keep pace with this rapid social change. For many of the new legal problems that are presented, the courts, like society, have had to discard the traditional ideas and to form new ones.

Many people fail to understand that courts are not absolute in their authority, but follow rules and laws that are set by legislatures and appellate courts.

In the area, now, of child custody, for example, all the States have seen the demise of the long established concept that the mother is presumed to be the best custodial parent. Next has come a departure from the legal principle that tbe best interest of a child of tender years would be best served by having that child in the custody of the mother.

Although all States have not left this concept, the trend has been adhered to by the vast majority of States. So now in most States the mother and father stand before the court and stand an equal chance before the law in getting custody. But it is very interesting to note that in the vast majority of cases in our jurisdiction, suddenly the parties still agree that the mother should have custody of the children.

The newest and highly publicized concept of joint or shared custody is gaining acceptance by more and more courts and legislatures each year. This concept is that the best interest of the child will be served by the continued influence of both father and mother. There will be, it is hoped, a change in attitude of the parents so that both can share in the decisions concerning the child, and that one parent will not be a visiting parent, or as one parent has said, a "Disneyland Daddy".

This concept sounds as if it is the panacea to all custody dispute problems. Having been granted joint custody, the parents feel very good about their settlement or their trial. The judges have made everybody happy, and that is a very, very seldom seen sight in domestic relations. The attorneys can relax because they have made their clients happy and they have successfully completed another case.

Too often in this developing stage of new law joint custody is granted without giving very, very serious thought to whether in this particular case will it work. Joint custody is not for every case. In fact, it is not a practical concept in most cases. Joint or shared custody cannot be thought of as granting each parent equal time with the child.

But the child's time has got to be apportioned to each parent in such a way as to provide for the best development and welfare of the child, not the parents. We must always remember, those of us who are in charge of this field of the law, that what is good for the parents and what the parents want is not necessarily the best thing for the child.

For joint custody to work, parents must be able to communicate rationally concerning the child's welfare. They must be able to cooperate in scheduling their times with the child around the child's schedule of school and extracurricular activities. There are many responsibilities which must be understood by these parents, which must be agreed upon, and even reduced to writing before a shared custody relationship can work well.

Our experience in court, however, is that if careful effort is applied and the parties communicate and will cooperate, joint custody can be successful for the child. One attorney is quoted as commenting, well, if the parents can get along that well, they really do not need a divorce. Yet, despite all the warnings and the cautions that we have had, lawmakers throughout the Nation in some 30 States to date are drafting legislation making joint custody the new concept.

These statutes range from mandating that joint custody be awarded unless the record discloses reasons for its denial, to a requirement that it must be considered by the trial judge in making a custody determination. In the mandating States, that is where the statute mandates that it will be used or granted unless the judge writes in writing the reasons for its refusal, is inviting judges to do the job of character assassination which most judges are very loathe to do, for now a situation might exist that later on will be cleaned up.

As a matter of public record, if it is written there, the reasons why it is denied due to some misconduct on the part of either of the parties will be there for the children and others to read in later years.

An even newer trend in legislation that is gaining support throughout the country is that of granting grandparents visitation rights with the grandchildren. It is interesting that this has either been passed by all of the legislatures of the United States or is under consideration at this time.

Certainly many recognize and revere the very precious and special relationship that grandparents and grandchildren can enjoy. The child of divorced parents is really now the object of the rights of a lot of people, and this is very important to me. I hope these words will strike home. The child can say, mom has a right to be with me at this time. Dad has the right to be with me at this time. My dad's parents have a right to be with me here, and mom's parents have got the right to visit here. When do I have the right for just me?

Senator **Denton**. I found that to be a very arresting and touching question, Judge Barnard. I am being harassed to go form a quorum in the Judiciary Committee. I am going to stubborn it out as long as I can here. But Strom Thurmond can get pretty tough. So I hope I can remain. Would you please summarize the rest of your testimony because your time is up.

Mr. **Barnard**. All right.

Senator **Denton**. Your testimony is extremely valuable.

Mr. **Barnard**. The two things that are giving judges a lot of heartburn and parents is that—or the one thing, really, is the subject of parental kidnaping. Despite the Parental Kidnaping Act or Prevention Act of 1980, there still is a small incidence of this. But it is very little consolation to the people who have had their children taken from them wrongfully, even by another parent, to say that you are just a victim of a very small percentage of the cases that come before us.

We are going now where more and more States are calling parental kidnaping where the children are taken across the State lines a felony. This is a thing that State legislatures are being rather loathe to do because it is hard to put the label of a felon upon a person who has taken his child out of love for that child. And most cases are genuine love, as opposed to enmity or hatred.

But more and more States are doing this or being forced into it because that is the only way that they can get the Federal intervention of the Federal locator system and extradition, to locate the child and to extradite the child, to bring the child and the offending parent back into the jurisdiction of the home State of the child.

Senator **Denton**. Thank you, Judge. That is the last major subject you are going to bring up, but in the constraints of time that we have available, we have your full statement, and with some oral questions, I hope we bring out the rest of your testimony.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Barnard follows:]

"DOMESTIC RELATIONS LAW - THE CHANGING TIMES"

Few divisions of the Courts in this country have had such an increase in case load as those devoted to Domestic Relations. Divorce has become an important aspect of the American Family Life.

It is becoming increasingly easy to obtain a divorce due to the "no fault" concept adopted by most legislatures. Both husband and wife are now considered capable and able to be financially independent of the other, so there is not the dependency concept that has existed in the past. The social and moral stigma that formerly was attached to divorce has gone. Divorce has become almost as common as marriage.

This new thought and attitude toward divorce has come about rather suddenly. Our court systems and laws are traditionally creatures of reaction and, unfortunately, have not been able to keep pace with the rapid social change. For many of the new legal problems presented the Courts, like society, has had to discard many traditional ideas and form new ones.

In the area of child custody, for example, all states have seen the demise of the long established concept that the mother is presumed to be the better custodial parent. Next has come the departure from the legal principle that the best interests of a child of "tender years" will be best served by being with the Mother. Although not all states have left this concept, the trend

HAS BEEN ADHERED TO BY THE VAST MAJORITY OF STATES. SO NOW, IN MOST STATES, MOTHER AND FATHER BOTH STAND AN EQUAL CHANCE, BEFORE THE LAW, OF GETTING CUSTODY. IT IS VERY INTERESTING TO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF CASES IN OUR JURISDICTION, THE PARTIES AGREE THAT THE MOTHER SHOULD HAVE CUSTODY OF THE CHILDREN.

THE NEW AND HIGHLY PUBLICIZED CONCEPT OF JOINT OR SHARED CUSTODY IS GAINING ACCEPTANCE BY MORE AND MORE COURTS AND LEGISLATURES EACH YEAR. THE CONCEPT IS THAT THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD WILL BE BEST SERVED BY THE CONTINUED INFLUENCE OF BOTH FATHER AND MOTHER. THERE WILL BE, IT IS HOPED, A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE BY THE PARENTS SO THAT BOTH CAN SHARE IN THE DECISIONS CONCERNING THE CHILD AND THAT ONE PARENT WILL NOT BE A "VISITING PARENT" OR HAS BEEN STATED A "DISNEYLAND DADDY". THIS CONCEPT SOUNDS AS IF IT IS THE PANACEA FOR ALL CUSTODY DISPUTE PROBLEMS. HAVING BEEN GRANTED "JOINT CUSTODY" THE PARENTS FEEL VERY GOOD ABOUT THEIR SETTLEMENT OR TRIAL, THE JUDGES HAVE MADE EVERYBODY HAPPY (A VERY SELDOM SEEN SIGHT IN DOMESTIC RELATIONS COURT) AND ATTORNEYS RELAX, HAVING SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED ANOTHER CASE. TOO OFTEN IN THIS DEVELOPING STAGE OF NEW LAW, JOINT CUSTODY IS GRANTED WITHOUT SERIOUS THOUGHT AS TO WHETHER, IN THIS CASE, WILL IT WORK?

JOINT CUSTODY IS NOT FOR EVERY CASE - IN FACT, IT IS NOT A PRACTICAL CONCEPT IN MOST CASES. JOINT OR SHARED CUSTODY CANNOT BE THOUGHT OF AS GRANTING EACH PARENT EQUAL TIME WITH THE CHILD, BUT THAT THE CHILD'S TIME IS TO BE APPORTIONED TO EACH PARENT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE BEST DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE OF

CHILD, NOT THE PARENTS. WE MUST REMEMBER ALWAYS THAT WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE PARENTS IS NOT NECESSARILY THE BEST FOR THE CHILD.

FOR JOINT CUSTODY TO WORK, THE PARENTS MUST BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE RATIONALLY CONCERNING THE CHILD'S WELFARE AND BEST INTERESTS, THEY MUST BE ABLE TO CO-OPERATE IN SCHEDULING THEIR TIMES WITH THE CHILD AROUND THE CHILD'S SCHEDULE OF SCHOOL AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES. THERE ARE MANY RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH MUST BE UNDERSTOOD, AGREED UPON AND REDUCED TO WRITING BEFORE A SHARED CUSTODY RELATIONSHIP CAN WORK WELL. OUR EXPERIENCE IS, HOWEVER, THAT IF CAREFUL EFFORT IS APPLIED AND THE PARTIES COMMUNICATE AND CO-OPERATE, JOINT CUSTODY CAN BE A SUCCESS. ONE ATTORNEY IS QUOTED AS COMMENTING - "IF THE PARENTS COULD GET ALONG THAT WELL, THEY WOULDN'T BE GETTING A DIVORCE".

YET FOR ALL THE WARNINGS AND CAUTIONS, LAWMAKERS THROUGHOUT THE NATION, AND IN SOME 30 STATES TO DATE, ARE DRAFTING LEGISLATION MAKING JOINT CUSTODY THE "NEW" CONCEPT. THESE STATUTES RANGE FROM MANDATING THAT JOINT CUSTODY BE AWARDED UNLESS THE RECORD DISCLOSES REASONS FOR ITS DENIAL TO A REQUIREMENT THAT IT MUST BE CONSIDERED BY THE TRIAL JUDGE IN MAKING A CUSTODY DETERMINATION.

AN EVEN NEWER TREND OF LEGISLATION, GAINING SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY IS THAT OF GRANTING GRANDPARENTS VISITATION RIGHTS WITH THE GRANDCHILDREN. CERTAINLY MANY RECOGNIZE AND REVERE THE PREVIOUS AND SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP GRANDPARENTS AND GRANDCHILDREN ENJOY. THE CHILD OF DIVORCED PARENTS IS REALLY THE OBJECT OF THE

"RIGHTS" OF A LOT OF PEOPLE. THE CHILD CAN SAY "MOM HAS A 'RIGHT' TO BE WITH ME FOR THIS TIME, DAD HAS THE 'RIGHT' TO BE WITH ME THAT TIME, DAD'S PARENTS HAVE THE 'RIGHT' TO VISIT HERE, AND MOM'S PARENTS HAVE THE 'RIGHT' TO VISIT THERE - WHEN DO I HAVE A 'RIGHT' TO BE WITH JUST ME?"

EVEN IN FOLLOWING THE CUSTOMARY SOLE CUSTODY WITH RIGHT OF VISITATION PROCEDURES, THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER HAS FORCED UPON THE COURT'S NEW PROBLEMS IN GREATER NUMBERS. IT IS NOT AT ALL UNUSUAL FOR ONE OR BOTH PARTIES TO LEAVE THE STATE AFTER THE DIVORCE AND SEEK THE FUTURE ELSEWHERE - MANY TIMES THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY. THIS PRACTICE HAS FORCED THE COURT'S AND, AGAIN, THE LEGISLATURE TO TAKE ACTION. THE OLD THEORY THAT ONCE A COURT HAS TAKEN JURISDICTION OF A CAUSE OF ACTION THAT IT MUST CONTINUE TO EXERCISE THAT JURISDICTION EXCLUSIVELY, HAS BEEN PUT ASIDE AS TO CUSTODY ISSUES. UNDER THE TERMS OF THE PARENTAL KIDNAPPING PREVENTION ACT OF 1980, A FEDERAL STATUTE, AND THE UNIFORM CHILD CUSTODY JURISDICTION ACT, THE JURISDICTION TO MODIFY CHILD CUSTODY DECREES FOLLOWS THE CHILD IF BOTH PARENTS HAVE LEFT THE STATE WHICH GRANTED THE DIVORCE. THIS LEGISLATION HAS BEEN USED IN A SURPRISINGLY LARGE NUMBER OF CASES. IT ALLOWS THE PARTIES TO BE HEARD WITHOUT HAVING TO TRAVEL GREAT DISTANCES TO THE JURISDICTION WHICH GRANTED THE DIVORCE, BUT IN WHICH NONE OF THEM NOW LIVE. AS WITH MOST NEW PIECES OF LEGISLATION, THESE ACTS HAVE GIVEN THE COURT'S CONSIDERABLE HEARTBURN IN TRYING TO APPLY THE STATUTES TO THE PARTICULAR FACT SITUATIONS, BUT OVERALL, THE EFFECTS ARE QUITE BENEFICIAL.

THE LAST MENTIONED FEDERAL ACT TRIED TO ADDRESS ONE OF THE SUBJECTS WHICH TODAY PROBABLY GIVES THE TRIAL JUDGES AND SOME PARENTS THE MOST HEARTACHE OF ALL - PARENTAL KIDNAPPING. THE IN-

CIDENTS OF PARENTAL KIDNAPPING ARE REALLY VERY FEW, PERCENTAGE WISE. IT IS OF LITTLE CONSOLATION, HOWEVER, TO ASSURE A CUSTODIAL PARENT WHO HAS HAD THE CHILD TAKEN AWAY, THAT HE OR SHE IS THE VICTIM OF A VERY SELDOM PRACTICED ACT. FACED WITH THIS SITUATION, HOWEVER, THE AGGRIEVED PARENT TURNS TO THE COURTS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR HELP. HERE, AGAIN, OUR COURTS ARE REACTING, BUT DO NOT HAVE THE READY AND COMPLETE ANSWER. TRADITIONALLY, STATES HAVE LEGISLATED THAT PARENTAL KIDNAPPING SHOULD BE TREATED AS A MISDEMEANOR. THEY HAVE BEEN SLOW TO PLACE A "FELONY CHARGE" AGAINST A NATURAL PARENT FOR TAKING HIS OR HER CHILD.

NOW, HOWEVER, WITH THE PROMINENCE GIVEN TO THIS PROBLEM A NEW LOOK IS BEING TAKEN AND STATES ARE ADOPTING LEGISLATION MAKING IT A FELONY FOR A PARENT TO WRONGFULLY TAKE OR KEEP CUSTODY FROM THE LAWFUL CUSTODIAN AND LEAVE THE STATE. THESE ACTS ARE PROMPTED BY THE FACT THAT FEDERAL AID CANNOT BE GIVEN TO LOCATE THE CHILD AND/OR PARENT FOR A MISDEMEANOR AND THAT EXTRADITION IS GENERALLY NOT CONSIDERED FOR ANYTHING LESS THAN A MISDEMEANOR. BY MAKING THIS PARENTAL KIDNAPPING A FELONY, IT IS GENERALLY HOPED THAT THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE CHARGE WILL DETER PARENTS FROM TAKING THEIR CHILDREN WRONGFULLY AND THAT, IF THEY SHOULD, THE FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES WILL EXERT EFFORTS TO LOCATE, TAKE INTO CUSTODY, AND RETURN THE CHILD AND THE OFFENDING PARENT TO THE STATE OF RESIDENCE OF THE CHILD. SUCH LEGISLATION IS NOT UNIVERSAL, IT IS NOT A PANACEA, BUT IT DOES GIVE THE VICTIMS A GLIMMER OF HOPE. LIKE ALL LEGISLATION DEALING WITH THE KNOTTY PROBLEMS OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS, HOWEVER, IT IS AND WILL BE SUBJECTED TO ABUSE AND WILL HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY REFINED IN THE JUDICIAL MILLS.

MY TIME FOR REMARKS HAS ABOUT EXPIRED, I SHALL CONCLUDE HERE, SUBJECT TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

I THANK YOU GENTLEMEN FOR ALLOWING A JUDGE'S VIEW AND INPUT IN YOUR CONSIDERATION OF THIS SUBJECT FOR WHICH NO COMPLETE ANSWERS APPEAR.

Senator **Denton**. And I will have to turn now to Dr. Wallace, who is at the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Wallace, welcome, and please proceed.

Mr. **Wallace**. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for inviting us here and for bringing this issue to a public forum, an issue we consider very important.

I am a pediatrician in private practice in Iowa City, a small town in Iowa, as Senator Grassley said. My appearance before you today is on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which I serve as a member of its committee on the psychosocial aspects of child and family health. As a private practitioner, I see 40 to 50 children a day, every day, in my office, many of them from broken homes.

Mr. Chairman, you have been given the written testimony of the Academy of Pediatrics. I choose not to repeat that testimony now in the interest of time.

[The prepared statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics follows:]

American Academy of Pediatrics

TESTIMONY

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGING, FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES
UNITED STATES SENATE

ON

EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

PRESENTED BY

PETER D. WALLACE, M.D., F.A.A.P.

MARCH 22, 1983

Division of Government Liaison
1300 North 17th Street
Arlington, Virginia 22209
703-525-9560

Mr. Chairman, I am Dr. Peter Wallace, a pediatrician in private practice in Iowa City, Iowa. My appearance before you today is on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which I serve as a member of its Committee on the Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. As a private practitioner, I see 40-50 children every day, including many from broken homes.

Divorce has become a common occurrence. In 1981 there were an estimated 1,219,000 divorces granted -- triple the total recorded in 1962. Each year more than one million children experience this life crisis for the first time. The divorce rate is approaching 50 percent of the marriage rate, and more than 60 percent of divorces involve young children. Nine million children, one out of seven, experience divorce of their parents, many more than once. If one adds desertion to these figures, 18 million children are affected.

It must be stated clearly, however, that divorce may be a necessary solution to defective family functioning and the outcome a positive, constructive one. Whereas many children show some effect secondary to the divorce, others compensate extremely well. The children who are able to cope with the situation are usually those who do not feel responsible for their parents' divorce, who ask questions and receive thoughtful answers, who are able to distance themselves from the parents' conflict, who have a support network and who accept the fact that their parents will never reunite. This situation is an ideal, but an attainable one.

The time prior to the separation or divorce may be unsettling, but for many family members, the transition period following divorce is particularly stressful. In some instances the separation and/or divorce process causes mothers and fathers to be too preoccupied to see the distress of others. The way parents cope with this crisis has much to do with how the children adjust.

Children of divorce are a vulnerable population. They must cope with the stress and turmoil of the family's discord. There is also usually decreased or little contact with one parent, most often the father. The custodial parent may be forced to work to offset financial difficulties; there may be a move to a new home.

Parents in these circumstances are busy dealing with their own feelings about each other and about themselves, and try to keep these feelings separate from those they have for their children. Parents are experiencing and attempting to cope with a wide range of emotions -- from anger, frustration, confusion and guilt to relief and euphoria. Unfortunately, some individual parents unwittingly involve their children in this condition and, often unconsciously, promote alliances against the other parent. The resulting confusion does nothing to ease the child's concerns.

Custody of the child or children also creates problems. The custodial parent is faced with the task of fulfilling alone the roles of both parents. A family with a mother and father offers a wider range of interests, skills and experiences for the child or children whereas a single parent is naturally more restricted in the characteristic models he or she portrays. The custodial parent sometimes experiences difficulty in arranging enough time with the children, as well as time for work and time alone. The parent often will feel pressured, even trapped, and the children sense this conflict. The non-custodial parent well may feel deprived and frustrated by the lack of interaction with his or her children. The limitations caused by set "visiting hours" creates more frustration, which, once again, the children sense.

Discipline may become a problem with single parents, especially single mothers. In the first years following divorce children tend to show increased aggressiveness, a lack of self-control, and a greater demand for attention and help. These characteristics are exhibited not only at home, but in school and with their peers.

The clinical manifestations of the effects of divorce on children depend upon the chronologic and/or developmental age of the child. The child under the age of three may respond with irritability, whining, crying, fearfulness, separation anxiety, sleep problems, increasing aggressive behavior and regression in toilet training. Children over the age of three, showing similar symptoms, shaken in their concept of the dependability of human beings, and exhibiting fear of abandonment, often irrationally blame themselves for the absence or unhappiness of parents, and have doubts about their own worth. School-age children over five may be moody, have tantrums, whine or be overly aggressive; however, being at an age when they can begin to understand more realistically what is going on, they frequently can express their sadness and their wish for parents to get back together. Their school performance may suffer, and they may agonize over divided loyalty to their parents. Adolescents may assume a greater degree of emotional independence as a way of dealing with these feelings about the divorce. In this process, they may de-idealize each parent and modify the earlier denial of their parents' sexuality. Angry feelings may be turned into aggressive antisocial behavior, and adolescents may worry about the financial and emotional effects of divorce on the family. Those who strategically can withdraw from the crisis seem to fare best. At all ages, somatization and disturbance of physical function may be a result of the deep feelings stirred in the child by having to deal with divorce.

One in every two or three families seen in pediatric practice may be in the process of divorce, separation or desertion. In today's society, we have a role to fill as professionals with expertise in the psychosocial aspects of child and family care. Parents look for support in their individual views; as pediatricians, we must provide help without becoming involved as a marital counselor. Our aim instead should be to guide parents to avoid adversarial relationships. We may be asked to assist the parent whenever the custodial parent remarries. Adjusting to this newly structured family can be stressful to the child.

As an advocate for the child, it is the physician's role to help parents inform children, to encourage parents to maintain their contacts and relationship with their children, and to be aware of children's need for stability. For instance, parents should attempt to maintain the child's environment as much as possible by keeping him or her in the same school or neighborhood and thus allow friendships to continue. Parents need to be encouraged to talk with their children in honest and simple terms about what is happening in their lives. They should help their children understand that the parents are enduring something painful in order that all might have healthier lives afterward. Parents and children need to be encouraged to voice their feelings about divorce.

Our role with children is to help them understand that the physician does not take sides with either parent, and is primarily interested in being helpful to the child. We can support the child in talking with both parents, emphasize that life does have its problems, reassure him or her that children do not cause parents' divorces, and that children and parents can live through these painful life crises. We can be available to the child for emotional support and as a confidant and teacher.

In addition, we can help parents and children find outside support and help during the stressful time of the divorce, e.g., social agencies, mental health centers, psychologists, other therapists interested and experienced in dealing with families, women's centers, and groups for divorced people and single parents. Books and articles are available for both parents and children.

The Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports all measures and programs which function to strenghthen families. We believe the family should, whenever possible, remain intact, but we do recognize this cannot always be. Divorce is a frequent fate in the lives of children in this country. The American Academy of Pediatrics and its members are prepared to help children cope with this adversity.

In conclusion, we must reiterate our concern that children not be forgotten or used as tools during a separation or divorce. They quickly react to the environment and atmosphere surrounding them. It is of utmost importance that, in a culture where this conflict so often exists, and where single-parent families are becoming commonplace, we remember to do more than just recognize the very real needs of these children. We must help them.

Thank you.

Mr. Wallace. But rather I would like to relate some of my own personal experience. Let me start on a positive note. Some may say that divorce is always destructive, that families must stay together no matter what the dysfunction. Judge Barnard has raised a very interesting point about the bitterness and acrimony in families, whether it is better for a child to stay in that situation or leave. I have had a number of families in my practice for whom divorce was clearly the best solution for all parties, particularly the children.

In one case the mother had been physically abused repeatedly in front of the children. The children had been verbally abused. Since the divorce, the children have become changed kids. They relate to me constantly how much calmer they are, how their school performance has improved, and moreover how much change they have seen in their mother in the divorce setting as opposed to the family setting. That is just one example.

Another family that came to mind, both parents were professors or are professors at the university, the father a very brilliant musician, three children. The father became increasingly depressed, often suicidal. In fact, he would announce periodically at the dinner table that everybody would be better off if he killed himself.

He refused professional help, and I think we can all imagine the tension and stress under which the family with two adolescents and a toddler lived. The parents finally did separate and they did divorce.

The father upon this breakup realized the extent of his illness and sought psychiatric help. And he now functions as a normal person. The interesting situation in this family is that they are now all good friends, all five of them; they do a lot together. They go out together. They go to functions together. But they do not live together as a family. And they probably never will, and maybe they never should. But their life seems to be better, and the kids again have told me how much better it is for them and how much more calm both parents seem now that they live separately.

Not all turn out that well. Shortly after I began seeing them, a young couple got divorced, and I do not know the reasons behind it. They had a young child, a 2-year-old boy. The mother, unfortunately, had all the inadequacies of a single parent. She was unable to cope with her new lifestyle. She had no outside help, and she had no family to lean on.

Her son, who now is about 4, became very aggressive with his playmates, overly dependent on his mother, very immature among other adults, and had a number of behavior problems. I have had a number of counseling sessions with this mother alone in my office, but she continues to struggle, making some strides, falling back, and I remember well her last words to me after one particularly long session because of a number of Ryan's behavior problems; she frankly said, I need a husband. And she probably did.

An interesting area which Judge Barnard has brought up is the custodial father situation, and the coping that these men do. Left with children by desertion or by the wishes of the court, these men have a rather unique role in our society now, which formerly, as the judge said, always favored the mother.

I have several of these situations in my practice. Many are students at the university. One in particular that I was involved in for a long period of time was a truck driver; a very modest education, very modest means, but he had been left with an adolescent daughter. His resource for coping was my office nurse.

And at least once a month for several years he would park his truck on the street outside my office and come in and ask the receptionist if he could speak with June, my office nurse. He asked her counsel about what kind of clothes he should buy his daughter; what her curfew hours might be; what the other girls in high school were doing at that time; about how to handle menstruation and education toward that end.

Only once did he seek me out for this particular counseling, and that was after his daughter had come to him and announced that she and her boyfriend intended to be sexually active and that she desired birth control for her protection. I thought this represented a rather unique and close relationship she had with her father which enabled her to ask him that. And all in all he did a very good job raising that child all by himself.

Let me speak briefly about a phenomenon which I am seeing in my office which has not been touched on but may be very germane. And that is what I call predivorce counseling. Parents whose child or children I have been seeing will make an appointment. Often I see them in the evening so both can come to discuss an upcoming divorce and its potential effects on their offspring. To me this indicates a very mature, incisive realization that their split has potential ramifications for their children as well as for them.

And they are unselfishly trying to avoid as many problems as they can before they occur and before the bitterness that we often find in the lawyer stage of divorce. They are putting their children first, in other words. Now, certainly not all problems are eliminated. But the spirit of dialog with me, an involved third party who knows their family and has worked with them over the years who can be impartial with their relationships, and who can put the mother-father relationship, the father-child, the mother-child relationships on a much better footing.

Mr. Chairman, 1 in every 2 or 3 families seen in our pediatric practice is in the process of divorce, separation, or desertion. We pediatricians have a role as professionals with expertise in the psychosocial aspects of child and family care. We are advocates for the child, and we must help the parents with their new problems and relationships, not as a marital counselor, not by taking sides with either parent, but by stressing the needs of their children.

Our role with these children is to understand and help them understand that the physician is primarily interested in being helpful to them. We can support that child. We can talk with both parents. We can emphasize that life does indeed have its problems. We can reassure them that they have not caused their parents' divorces, which is a common child's feeling.

We can reassure them that parents and children alike can live through these painful life crises and may even come out better. And we can be available to the child for emotional support, confidant, and as a teacher.

The Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports all measures and programs which funtion to strengthen families. We believe the family should, whenever possible, remain intact. But we recognize that this cannot always be. Divorce is a frequent fate in the lives of children in this country.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and its members are prepared to help children cope with this adversity.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we must reiterate our concern that children are not forgotten, and they are not used as tool in a separation or divorce. They react very quickly to their environment and the atmosphere surrounding them, often adversely. And it is of utmost importance that in a culture where this conflict so often exists, as we have heard from the statistics, and where single parent families are becoming commonplace, that we remember to do more than just recognize the very real needs of these children; we must help them.

Thank you for your attention, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Dr. Wallace. You made the point well that some divorces are better consummated than aborted, and I do not think anyone who has testified, including this Senator, would disagree with that. I guess you would also agree though that we might have had an increase in our divorce rate which may not bode well for the society unless we try to do what we can to eliminate the problem of some not knowing how to fight well, as Professor Etzioni said it.

I doubt that there is a marriage that does not have some pretty active fighting going on in it. And to draw the line where the kids would be better off with them totally separated and divorced or not is a function of how well they know how to fight and get over it, I guess, and the personalities of the people involved.

Do either of you want to comment on that?

Mr. WALLACE. Well, you are quite right, Senator. It is an individual situation, and to generalize on that, I think, is very difficult.

Mr. BARNARD. One thing I would like to bring to your attention is the fact that the people who think that we can get a divorce and this will all be over are in for a tragic surprise, that in many, many cases the action and enmity goes right on. It is not over.

Senator DENTON. And in some cases, as Dr. Wallace pointed out, they can become and remain friends. I guess it is a question of whether or not we have made divorce too easy, whether or not there is sufficient thought and contemplation before the fact of contracting marriage about the hard road that it represents.

You mentioned anger, Judge Barnard; I would like to ask you two if you have noticed whether that anger, predivorce or postdivorce, is often connected with sexual jealousy. In fact, two statements made today were almost identical with some that I have read in Socrates, H. G. Wells, Bettelheim, and others who have commented on this throughout the ages.

H. G. Wells, for example, in his Outline of History, talk about how young civilization is and how many times it has been broken off in different societies. He observes with many other historians that there are really only two requisites for civilization, family and agriculture, and that the one must come before the other because you have to get together and coexist and then coexist with other familial groups before you can have the community effort to undertake agriculture.

But he goes on to say that although we have schooled the beasts, rather tamed the beasts and schooled the lightening, we have still only begun to tame ourselves. And he says, make men or women only sufficiently jealous or angry or fearful, and the hot red eyes of the caveman will glare out at us again today.

From your own observations—and I will ask this of the other sets of witnesses—do you think there is any relationship between the new sexual permissiveness, called the sexual revolution by some, the divorce rate, the increase in the rate of personal violent crime, that sort of thing. Would either of you care to comment about that.

Judge Barnard. I do not exactly understand. Perhaps, let me defer.

Senator DENTON. Well, H. G. Wells said, make men or women only sufficiently jealous or angry or fearful, and the hot red eyes of the caveman will glare out at us again today. It appears from the context of his statement that he did not pick the word jealous by chance to place it first. It preceded angry or fearful. We are fearful of many things: nuclear holocaust, crime in the streets, death, pain. We can become angry about many things. But he put jealousy first in that triad.

Mr. BARNARD. Certainly, in the trial of divorce cases, jealousy plays a great part, and postdivorce, there is still that hanging on in so many, many cases. We call it laughingly the new wife syndrome. Everything after divorce goes along fine until the husband gets a new wife, and then trouble begins.

Senator DENTON. Or vice versa.

Mr. BARNARD. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Mr. WALLACE. I would not presume to be an expert on this, Senator, but it would be my feeling that the extramarital affair, the sexuality, the new partner on the sly, may not be the triggering incident for a divorce, but may indeed be a symptom of the marriage itself, and that the partner is escaping because there is something fundamentally wrong with the marriage.

It is not just the sexual permissiveness of society that is doing this. The root of it is in the family constellation and the breakdown therein.

Senator DENTON. I did not mean to imply that it would always be either the triggering mechanism or the root cause, and I am sure that in many cases it is the result of finding the other partner unattractive for one reason or another. But I would think that at times, with the environment the way it is today, it would have to be a factor, perhaps even an original factor. That is my own belief.

Well, thank you very much for your testimony, gentlemen. And we will have other questions for your which we will submit in writing.

Mr. BARNARD. We will be happy to answer them, Senator.

[The questions with responses referred to follow:]

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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND
HUMAN RESOURCES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

April 1, 1983

Dr. Peter Wallace
American Academy of Pediatrics
c/o Dr. James E. Strain
1300 North Seventeenth Street
Suite 350
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Dear Dr. Wallace:

Thank you so much for your outstanding testimony before the Subcommittee on Family and Human Services on the topic of "The Broken Family: Overview and Effect on Children." Your statement will be most useful to the Subcommittee as it continues its study of the causes, effects and possible solutions to the family breakdown crisis.

I would appreciate it if you could provide answers to the following questions for inclusion in the written record. The record will be held open for ten days so that you may prepare your answers.

1. In your written statement you point out that "angry feelings may be turned into aggressive antisocial behavior" on the part of adolescents of divorced parents. Do you know the typical amount of time that such behavior persists after the divorce?

Senator Christopher Dodd, ranking minority member of the Subcommittee, has asked that the following questions also be submitted for the record.

1. What more needs to be done to assist children whose parents are separating or in conflict?
2. What further role can pediatricians play?
3. What further role can be played by social and mental health agencies?

Dr. Peter Wallace
April 1, 1983
Page Two

4. How can the federal government better assist you?

My colleagues and I appreciate your time and effort to give the Subcommittee the benefit of your views on this vital issue.

With kindest regards.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Denton
JEREMIAH DENTON
United States Senator

JAD:nh

Enclosures

Senator Denton

QUESTION #1: In your written statement you point out that "angry feelings may be turned into aggressive antisocial behavior" on the part of adolescents of divorced parents. Do you know the typical amount of time that such behavior persists after the divorce?

ANSWER: To my knowledge and in my experience, there is no typical or average time before aggressive and antisocial behavior may begin. Some of this behavior may begin even before the divorce in the time of turmoil as the family pulls apart and the teenager feels abandoned or has less supervision. On the other hand, some aggressive antisocial behavior may begin only years after the divorce and may represent a culmination of many effects of the divorce on a child. This may be especially true when the divorce occurs while the child is pre-adolescent and the effects are not seen until the adolescent years.

Senator Dodd

QUESTION #1: What more needs to be done to assist children whose parents are separating or in conflict?

ANSWER: I perhaps am not the best to answer this question and perhaps Dr. Judith Walterstein's book Surviving the Breakup or Dr. Walterstein's testimony would be more germane. However, I feel personally that research needs to be done to discover the problems arising from divorce, the effects on children (short and long term) and the results of therapy or counseling. In short, we need much more information to provide adequate assistance to these children.

QUESTION #2: What further role can pediatricians play?

ANSWER: Pediatricians need to be "captain" of the ship -- since he or she is usually the first professional to know about the divorce and becomes involved with the parents and children. He or she should make some assessment as to the need for counseling, referral to other professionals, etc. The pediatrician must always be a "third party" with the children's interests at heart, not siding with either parent but acting as a representative of the child to the parent.

QUESTION #3: What further role can be played by social and mental health agencies?

ANSWER: I feel that social and mental health agencies need to have an expanded role in counseling. This should not be just a one time visit but a long term association with families to provide ongoing therapy and counseling. Many of my divorcing parents end up with psychiatrists, which may not be the most expedient or inexpensive counseling available. Perhaps social and mental health agencies can be more inexpensively used to fill this need and used more appropriately than psychiatrists.

QUESTION #4: How can the federal government better assist you?

ANSWER: I feel that there are basically three areas: 1) there should be a centralized role in planning. I feel that a drawing together of the interested agencies and divisions concerning divorce and its effects on children into one office, perhaps through the Office of Maternal and Child Health, would provide a less expensive but more comprehensive and efficient means of planning for future action; 2) I think that there must be a commitment on the part of the government financially, not necessarily more money but more efficient use of money -- that is, proper allocation, to fund groups for research, for training of professionals, and for the sponsorship of seminars and other teaching means for those of us who deal with the effects of divorce on children; and 3) I think that the federal government which has sometimes shown a tendency to support "family" at all extremes must be cognizant of the current status in American society where divorce is common place and the children involved are numbering in the millions. In other words, we must accept today's situation of the presence of divorce, day care and single parents and we need to work to improve the lot of those caught in this whip and not try to return to a time which is no more.

Senator DENTON. Panel III will be the former chairman of the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Children and Family, Dr. Armand M. Nicholi; Dr. Judith Wallerstein, of the Center for the Family in Transition, Corte Madera, Calif.; and Dr. Nicholis Zill, President of Child Trends, Inc.

Welcome to our hearing. We will proceed alphabetically and ask Dr. Nicholi to proceed first. Thank you.

STATEMENTS OF ARMAND M. NICHOLI, JR., M.D., DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL; JUDITH S. WALLERSTEIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR THE FAMILY IN TRANSITION, CORTE MADERA, CALIF.; AND NICHOLIS ZILL, PRESIDENT, CHILD TRENDS, INC.

Mr. NICHOLI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to be here and to share with you some ideas on this vitally important topic.

To understand the full impact of divorce on children, I think it is necessary to have some awareness of the large reservoir of research accumulated over the past 25 years exploring the influence on a child of the loss or absence of a parent.

And today, this morning, in the brief time that we have, I would like to give an overview of that research, some little of which I contributed to in my work.

Soon after a child experiences the divorce of his parents, he usually finds as a consequence of that divorce that one of his parents is absent. Over half of all the children in the United States under 18 years of age have one or both parents missing.

Because of divorce, an increasing number of homes have only one parent. One-parent families, as we have heard in previous testimony, are growing rapidly, growing at about 20 times the rate of two-parent families.

Most children experience an absent parent as rejection, and rejection inevitably breeds resentment and hostility. The child may express this hostility outward in the form of violence or inwardly in the form of self-injury. The suicide rate in 10- to 14-years olds in the United States has doubled, and in children 15 to 19, has tripled during the past 20 years as we have seen the divorce rate accelerate.

These trends have resulted in our society producing a staggering number of angry, depressed, and suicidal children. Research indicates that the loss or absence of a parent predisposes a child to a variety of crippling emotional disorders that manifest themselves immediately or later in that child's life.

If one factor influences the character development and the emotional stability of a person, it is the quality of the relationship he experiences as a child with both of his parents. Conversely, if people suffering from severe nonorganic mental illness have one experience in common, it is the absence of a parent through death, divorce, time demanding job or absence for some other reason.

A parent's inaccessibility, either physically or emotionally or both, can exert a profound influence on the child's emotional health. These impressions come from a body of research which began over three decades ago, and that led the World Health Organization over 20 years ago to make this statement:

> What is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother.

And then they presented evidence that many forms of psychoneuroses and character disorders are to be attributed to the absence of the mother or to discontinuities in the child's relationship with his mother. In the years following that statement, research again from throughout the world has demonstrated that a separation from the mother, even for brief periods of hospitalization and the quality of the mother's relationship with the child can in some cases profoundly affect both the child's physical and emotional development.

And more recent research has demonstrated the full emotional impact on that child of the missing or inaccessible father. What has been shown over and over again to contribute most to the emotional development of the child is a close, warm, sustained and continuous relationship with both parents. Yet, the accelerating divorce rate today in our society makes this difficult to attain.

The ever increasing divorce rate subjects an ever increasing number of children to physically and emotionally absent parents. As we have heard, the divorce rate has risen some 700 percent in this century and continues to soar. There has been a slight leveling off in the past year or two. Over a million children a year are involved in divorce; 13 million children under 18 have one or both parents missing.

The accelerating divorce rate has also contributed to a change in child rearing that has been taking place in this country during the past few decades. The change is this: in American homes today child care has shifted from parents to other agencies. A home in which both parents are available to the child emotionally as well as physically has become in some areas of our society the exception rather than the rule. And I refer not only to the disadvantaged and the divorced homes where the father is missing and the mother works, I refer to even the most affluent homes.

Cross cultural studies show that U.S. parents spend considerably less time with their children than almost any other nation in the world. Although both Russian parents work and although Russian children spend a great deal of time in family collectives, the emotional ties between parents and children are stronger and the time spent together considerably greater than in the United States. And there is relatively little juvenile delinquency in Russia.

Some Russian fathers, in research done not too long ago, stated that they would never let a day go by without spending 2 hours with their son.

And research that has been conducted in Boston in a small suburb investigating how much time fathers spend with their very young sons shows that the average time per day is about 37 seconds.

From my clinical experience and from my research with college students, I began to notice that, one, a large number suffered from an incapacitating symptomatic or characterological conflict; two, that they seemed to have in common a number of traumatic earlier experiences with rejecting, inaccessible, or absent parents; and three, when we looked at their histories carefully, there appeared to be some causal relation between the earlier experiences and the emotional illness they were suffering as a young adult.

About 15 years ago, I began studying over a period of time several hundred young men who had dropped out of Harvard for psychiatric reasons. Two characteristics of the group were: one, a marked isolation and alienation from their parents, especially their fathers; and two, an overwhelming apathy and lack of motivation.

In addition, among those who had the most serious illness, that is, those hospitalized and diagnosed as schizophrenia, a large number lost one or both parents through death. When compared with several control groups, this finding proved highly significant statistically.

This provided us with our first clue that there might be a relation between a missing parent and emotional illness. As I began to work with patients clinically, I began to realize that absence through death is the most severe kind of absence, but there were many other kinds of absences, certainly not the least of which was that caused by divorce. Recent studies we have conducted among school children this past year in a Boston suburb indicated that children who had experienced divorce or death within the family had a statistically significant higher incidence of a particular emotional illness that we were studying among children.

Over the past few years research studies have been carried out throughout the world trying to refine our understanding of this phenomenon and trying to understand why some children are paralyzed by the loss of a parent through divorce or death and others seem to be unaffected, in the same way some people are paralyzed by polio and others are not affected by it.

The research is fascinating and we could spend a great deal of time discussing it. Studies on missing fathers have been carried out in several different countries. One published in the Archives of General Psychiatry, I think, is quite representative of many other studies. It is a study of the periodic absence of a father on 200 children seen at military medical clinics where the father's absence was due to his military preoccupation. The children ranged from 3 to 18 years of age. The researchers found early reaction to the father's departure resembled reactions to children who lose a father by death: one, rageful protest over desertion; two, denial of the loss and an intense fantasy relationship with the parent; three, efforts at reunion; four, irrational guilt and a need for punishment; five, exaggerated separation anxieties and fear of being abandoned; six, a decrease in impluse control that we think is quite characteristic of a great segment of our society today, the decrease in impulse control; and a wide variety of regressive symptoms.

When the father left home, it was found the child was often allowed to do things not otherwise permitted. This made it difficult for the child to internalize a consistent set of standards for controlling his behavior. In several instances, the father's leaving was followed by disobedience, decline in school performance, and aggressive, antisocial behavior.

The child seemed unable to control himself, and this loss of control is especially interesting in light of the observation that more and more people today visit a psychiatrist because of a lack of impulse control; whereas, 15 years ago my experience has been that people came primarily because they were unable to express their impulses, today they come because they are unable to control them.

Several other recent studies bear on the absence or inaccessibility of the father, and all point to the same conclusions. A father absent for long periods contributes to (*a*) low motivation for achievement; (*b*) inability to defer gratification for later rewards; (*c*) low self-esteem; (*d*) susceptibility to group influence and juvenile delinquency. The absent father tends to have passive, effeminate, dependent sons, lacking in achievement and motivation.

These are general findings with, of course, many, many exceptions.

What about the future? Mr. Chairman, what can we expect if the divorce rate continues to soar? First of all, I think the family life will continue to deteriorate in this country, producing a society with a higher incidence of mental illness than we have ever known before. 95 percent of our hospital beds may be taken up by the mentally ill.

The nature of this illness will be characterized, I think, primarily by a lack of impulse control. In this impulse ridden society of tomorrow, we can expect the assassination of people in authority to be an everyday occurrence. All crimes of violence will increase, even those within the family, because battered children, if they survive, tend to become parents who in turn abuse their children. The amount of violence within the family will increase exponentially. Aggression turned inward will also increase, and we can expect the divorce rate to continue to soar.

What can we do about this? It seems to me that we must take steps to reverse this process of producing empty and angry young people whose rage erupts either in uncontrolled violence or in depression and self-destruction. When a family disintegrates, to reduce it to its simplest terms, both children and adults suffer a form of intense loneliness, that has been referred to in earlier testimony, and this loneliness is the most painful and most frightening of human experiences.

Loneliness is so painful to even contemplate that modern psychiatry has pretty much avoided the study of it. People suffering from nonorganic disorders prevalent today, drug addicts, alcoholics, workaholics, and even psychotics, may in large measure be attempting to avoid the pain of loneliness. When a person is left alone on a raft or in a chamber for long periods of time, he will often develop hallucinations and other psychotic symptoms to avoid this pain.

In addition, the first terrifying fear that we experience as a child is the fear of being abandoned, of being left alone. Also, according to research at the Massachusetts General Hospital by some of my colleagues on dying patients show that fear of being abandoned is one of the last fears we experience in this life. It is my conviction that because of divorce and family disintegration millions struggle with loneliness at some level throughout their lives; regardless of how closely they work with people, it does not replace the emotional sustenance and support that the close, warm personal relationships of a healthy family can provide.

In conclusion, I have tried to give a brief look at research in this area——

Senator DENTON. We have, Dr. Nicholi, given you 5 minutes more than your allotted time. So if you could make your conclusion in a minute——

Mr. NICHOLI. I will make it very brief, sir. As the divorce rate gradually accelerated in the early sixties and then exploded upward in the late sixties and throughout the seventies, clinical and laboratory research indicates that it is no coincidence that this trend was also closely followed by a paralleled increase in juvenile violent crime and the tendency of a huge segment of our society to use psychoactive drugs.

This drug taking began in the early sixties among a few college students on the east and west coasts. Today it involves between one-quarter and one-half of our entire population, and 20 million people alone smoke marihuana daily. Research has shown that the drug population today is very much like the population of the early sixties when it was much smaller: namely, it is populated by people of disaffection and rebellion who tend to come from broken and disorganized homes.

I might say just in a last sentence or two that the Government, it seems to me, must recognize fully that families are the vital cells that constitute the flesh and blood of our society, and that when one family disintegrates, so does some part of our society; and that Government must attempt through the media and through every means possible to change the Nation's attitude toward the family so that it is given the highest priority.

The Government must encourage and sponsor research into the causes of divorce; because human behavior is complex and multidetermined, research must come from many disciplines.

And then this final sentence: The disruption of families not only imposes a vast economic burden on the Nation, but it inflicts upon individual citizens more sorrow and suffering than war and poverty and inflation combined. Once these facts are fully comprehended, I think the entire Nation will realize that the problem of divorce can no longer be neglected.

To spend vast sums of money in other areas while neglecting the area of divorce is like placing an expensive roof on a house while neglecting a raging fire in the basement below.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nicholi follows:]

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HEARING OF THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES

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To understand the full impact of divorce on children, we must have some awareness of the large reservoir of research accumulated over the past 25 years exploring the influence on a child of the loss or absence of a parent. For soon after a child experiences the divorce of his parents, he usually finds as a consequence of that divorce that one of his parents is absent. Over half of all children in the U.S. under 18 years have one or both parents missing. Because of divorce, an increasing number of homes have only one parent. One parent families are growing at 20 times the rate of 2 parent. families. Most children experience an absent parent as rejection and rejection inevitably breeds resentment and hostility. The child may express this outwardly in the form of violence or inwardly in the form of self injury. The suicide rate in 10 to 14 year olds in the United States has doubled and in children 15 to 19 has tripled during the past 20 years. These trends have resulted in our society producing a staggering number of angry, depressed and suicidal children. Research indicates that the loss or absence of a parent predisposes a child to a variety of crippling emotional disorders that manifest themselves immediately or later in life.

If one factor influences the character development and emotional stability of a person, it is the quality of the relationship he experiences as a child with both of his parents. Conversely, if people suffering from severe non-organic emotional illness have one experience in common, it is the absence of a parent through death, divorce, time-demanding job or absence for other reasons. A parent's inaccessibility either physically, emotionally, or both, can exert a profound influence on the child's emotional health. These impressions come from a vast body of research which began over three decades ago and that led the World Health Organization over twenty years ago to make this statement: "What is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother..." and then presented evidence that many forms of psychoneuroses and character disorders are to be attributed to the absence of the mother or to discontinuities in the child's relationship with his mother. In the years following that statement, research throughout the world has demonstrated that a separation from the mother, even for brief periods of hospitalization, and the quality of the mother's relationship with the child, can profoundly affect both the child's physical and emotional development. And more recent research has demonstrated the full emotional impact on the child of the missing or inaccessible father. What has been shown over and over again to contribute most to the emotional development of the child is a close, warm, sustained and continuous relationship with both parents. Yet the accelerating divorce rate today in our society makes this most difficult to attain.

The ever-increasing divorce rate subjects an ever-increasing number of children to physically and emotionally absent parents. The divorce rate has risen 700% in this century and continues to soar. Over a million children a year are involved in divorce cases; 13 million children under 18 have one or both parents missing.

The accelerating divorce rate has also contributed to a change in child rearing that has been taking place in this country during the past few decades. The change is this: in American homes today child-care has shifted from parents to other agencies. A home in which both parents are available to the child emotionally as well as physically has become, in some areas of our society, the exception rather than the rule. And I refer not only to the disadvantaged and divorced home where the father is missing and the mother works. I refer to even the most affluent homes. Cross-cultural studies show that United States parents spend considerably less time with their children than almost any other country in the world. Although both Russian parents work and although Russian children spend a great deal of time in family collectives, emotional ties between children and parents are stronger and the time spent together considerably greater than in the United States; there is relatively little juvenile delinquency in Russia. Some Russian fathers have said they would never let a day go by without spending two hours with their sons. A study in a small community in this country of how much time fathers spend with their very young sons show that the average time per day is about 37 seconds.

From my clinical experience and from my research with college students, I begin to notice (1) that a large number suffered from an incapacitating symptomatic or characterological conflict, (2) that they seemed to have in common a number of traumatic early experiences with a rejecting, inaccessible or absent parent, and (3) when we looked at their histories carefully, there appeared to be some causal relation between the earlier experiences and the emotional illness they were suffering as an adult. About 15 years ago I began studying several hundred young men who had dropped out of Harvard for psychiatric reasons. Two characteristics of the group were (1) a marked isolation and alienation from their parents, especially their fathers, and (2) an overwhelming apathy and lack of motivation. In addition, among those who had the most serious illness, that is, those hospitalized and diagnosed as schizophrenic, a large number lost one or both parents through death; when compared with several control groups, this finding proved highly significant statistically. This provided me with my first clue that there might be a relation between a missing parent and emotional illness. As I begin to work with patients clinically, I begin to realize that absence through death was the most severe kind of absence, but that there were many other kinds of absence. recent studies we conducted among school children this past year in a Boston suburb indicated that children who had experienced divorce or death within the family had a statistically significant higher incidence of a particular emotional disorder. Over the past few years, research studies have been carried out throughout the world trying to refine our understanding of this phenomenon and trying to understand why some children are paralyzed by the loss of a parent through divorce or death and others seem to be unaffected (in the same way some people are paralyzed by polio and others not). The research is fascinating and we could spend several hours discussing it.

Studies on missing fathers have been carried out in several different countries. One published in the Archives of General Psychiatry, studied the periodic absence of the father on 200 children seen at a military medical clinic where the father's absence was due to his military occupation. The children ranged from 3 to 18 years of age.

The researchers found early reaction to the father's departure resembled reactions to children who lose a father by death: (1) rageful protest over desertion, (2) denial of the loss and an intense fantasy relationship with the parent, (3) efforts at reunion, (4) irrational guilt and a need for punishment, (5) exaggerated separation anxieties and fears of being abandoned, (6) a decrease in impulse control, and (7) a wide variety of regressive symptoms.

When the father left home, the child was often allowed to do things not otherwise permitted. This made it difficult for the child to internalize a consistent set of standards for controlling his behavior. In several instances, the father's leaving was followed by disobedience, decline in school performance, and aggressive antisocial behavior. The child seemed unable to control himself and this loss of control is especially interesting in light of the observation that more people today come to psychiatrists because of a lack of impulse control.

Several other recent studies bear on the absence or inaccessibility of the father and all point to the same conclusions: A father absent for long periods contributes to (a) low motivation for achievement, (b) inability to defer immediate gratification for later rewards, (c) low self-esteem, (d) susceptibility to group influence and to juvenile delinquency. The absent father tends to have passive, effeminate, dependent sons lacking in achievement, motivation and independence. These are general findings with, of course, many exceptions.

What about the future? What can we expect if the divorce rate continues to soar? First of all, the quality of family life will continue to deteriorate, producing a society with a higher incidence of mental illness than ever before known. Ninety-five percent of our hospital beds may be taken up by mentally ill patients. The nature of this illness will be characterized primarily by a lack of impulse control. In this impulse ridden society of tomorrow we can expect the assassination of people in authority to be an every-day occurrence.

All crimes of violence will increase, even those within the family. Because battered children - if they survive - tend to become parents who in turn abuse their children, the amount of violence within the family will increase exponentially. Aggression turned inward will also increase and the suicide rate will continue to soar.

What can we do about them? We must take steps to reverse this process of producing empty and angry young people whose rage erupts either in uncontrolled violence or in depression and self-destruction. When a family disintegrates - to reduce it to its simplest terms - both children and adults suffer a form of intense loneliness - the most painful and most frightening of human experiences. Loneliness is so painful to even contemplate that modern psychiatry has pretty much avoided the study of it. People suffering from nonorganic disorders prevalent today - drug addicts, alcoholics, workaholics, and even psychotics - may in large measure be attempting to avoid the pain of loneliness. When a person is left alone on a raft or in a chamber for long periods of time, he will often develop hallucinations and other psychotic symptoms to avoid this pain. In addition, the first terrifying fear we experience as a child is the fear of being abandoned, of being left alone. Also, according to research at the Massachusetts General Hospital on dying patients, fear of being abandoned is one of the last fears we experience in this life. And it's my conviction that because of divorce and family disintegration millions struggle with loneliness at some level throughout their lives - regardless of how closely they work with people. For professional relationships can never give us the emotional sustenance and support that the close, warm, personal relationships a healthy family life provide.

Conclusion

In a brief look at research in this area we have observed the high divorce rate in this nation has a profound effect not only on children but on all aspects of our society. As this divorce rate gradually accelerated in the early 60's and then exploded upward in the late 60's and throughout the 70's, clinical and laboratory research indicates that it's no coincidence that this trend was followed closely by a parallel increase in juvenile violent crime and the tendency of a huge segment of our society to use psychoactive drugs. This drug taking began in the early 60's among a few college students on the east and west coasts. Today it involves between a quarter and a half of our entire population. Twenty million people smoke marijuana daily. Research has shown that the drug population today is very much like the population in the early 60's when it was much smaller, namely people of disaffection and rebellion w/c tend to come from broken and disorganized homes. Time limits discussing any detailed recommendations for action. (1) Suffice it to say that the government must recognize fully that families are the vital cells that constitute the flesh and blood of our society. When one family disintegrates, so does a part of our society. (2) Government must attempt through the media and through every means possible to change the nation's attitude toward the family so that it is given the highest priority. (3) Government must encourage and sponsor research into the causes of divorce. Because human behavior is complex and multidetermined research must come from many disciplines. (4) The government must help the nation become aware that poor academic performance, susceptibility to peer influence and delinquent behavior as well as suicide and homocide have been found to be higher among children from divorced homes in which one or both parents are missing or frequently absent.

The disruption of families not only imposes a vast economic burden on the nation but inflicts upon individual citizens more sorrow and suffering than war, poverty and inflation combined. Once these facts are comprehended, the government and the entire nation will realize that the problem of divorce can no longer be neglected. To spend vast sums of money in other areas while neglecting the area of divorce is like placing an expensive roof on a house while neglecting a raging fire in the basement of that house. I commend this committee for beginning an exploration of this problem.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Dr. Nicholi. Dr. Wallerstein.

Ms. WALLERSTEIN. Thank you very much. I am delighted to have this opportunity to appear here. I am the principal investigator of the California Children of Divorce Project, which is the longest continuous investigation, the California Children of Divorced Project, of children and parents in divorcing families in the United States.

As a result of findings from this investigation, which is currently in its 10th year, and from which a great many articles and one book have emanated, the Center for the Family in Transition was established in Marin County, Calif., in 1980 by the San Francisco Foundation and the Zellerback Family Fund to develop services and to do research on behalf of separating and divorced families and families on the threshold of remarriage.

The Center for the Family in Transition is the only such center in the United States. We provide service to more divorcing families than any other agency in the country. My statement is as follows:

Chronic marital unhappiness, whether expressed in anger punctuated by violence or manifested primarily in loneliness and depression, is detrimental to the well being of children and adults. Although most parents worry about the effects of divorce on their children, an increasing number are opting for divorce as a remedy to a troubled marriage. Since 1973, over 1 million children each year in this country have experienced the divorce of their parents. Arthur J. Norton, Ph. D., Assistant Chief of the Population Division of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, estimates that of children born today, 45 percent will experience their parents' divorce and 35 percent will experience their parents' remarriage.

Other statistics are that 80 percent of divorcing men and 75 percent of divorcing women remarry.

Our own work indicates that marital difficulties that precede the divorce decision are likely to be cumulative and long-lasting, although they sometimes reflect response to an unexpected tragic event that impacts on the family. Our data show that parents do not undertake this decision lightly and that marital infidelity does not represent the major cause of divorce.

Many people live in quiet desperation or demeaning conflict for years before one or both decide to divorce. Yet while marital dissolution provides a remedy to a hapless marriage, it brings in its wake the whole new set of psychological, social, and economic changes that are more difficult and more distressing than most people anticipate.

Marital dissolution is a process that begins with the escalating distress in the marriage, often peaks at the separation and legal filing, and then ushers in several years of transition and disequilibrium before the adults are able to gain a sense of continuity and confidence in their new roles and relationships within a stable, single parent or remarried family.

If the woman is the custodial parent, as women are for 90 percent of children of divorce, the new family unit is often beset by severe economic problems. As one mother told us, "I feel like I am treading water in a tidal wave." The average time that it took the woman in our studies to reconstitute, restabilize her life, was 3 to 3½ years postseparation.

Most children and adolescents are very distressed by the marital breakup at the time that it occurs. Their capacity to understand the reasons that prompted the parental decision or the march of events in the family is limited.

Youngsters who have been frightened by family conflict, violence, or the untoward behavior of one parent are likely to feel vastly relieved. Many children are afraid that their needs will be overlooked in the crisis. They worry about parents who appear troubled, and whether their parents will be able to manage.

They yearn for the parent that has left the home. They grieve for the loss of the family. Sometimes the anxieties of the children spill into school and temporarily impede learning, or they affect relationships with peers and teachers adversely.

During the immediate aftermath of a separtion, children can be forlorn and lonely. Arthur, a 9-year-old lad, told us soberly, "I am at a dead end in the middle of nowhere". Only a minority have available grandparents, members of the extended family, or other adults within the community or the school to comfort or to befriend them.

Children and their parents are at their most vulnerable during the several transitional years following the marital breakup. During this period, when the outcome hangs in the balance, many divorced families need a range of psychological, social, and economic support. These are largely unavailable at the present.

A great many children and adolescents emerge from divorced families as independent, self-confident youngsters who grow into productive, stable, moral, and compassionate adults whose maturity may indeed have been enhanced by the family travail. The factors in good outcome are not accidental. Good outcome, over the long haul, is associated with the resolution of conflict and the subsiding of anger between the parents so that the child is able to conclude that the divorce indeed makes sense and that the parents have behaved rationally and responsibly in seeking and finding a solution for an unhappy marriage. Good outcome is associated with stable custody and visitation arrangements that can adapt flexibly to change but do not threaten continually to break down.

Some parents can achieve this by themselves. Others need specialized counseling services and mediation at the time of the breakup and during the years that follow. These are in short supply. Good outcome is associated with the restoration of the nurturing by the custodial parent or by both parents after the expectable dip in parenting following the marital breakup.

The economic stabilization of the parent or both parents is critical to the well-being of the child. Important components of this stabilization are reliable employment, realistic and adequate child support paid regularly—and I should say that more than one-half of the fathers in this country do not pay child support—guidance and retraining for women returning to work, school, affordable child care, and after school programs that enhance the child's life.

These programs are inadequate to the needs. Good outcome is associated with the continued relationships with both parents, whether via adequate visitation or a joint custody arrangement fashioned to the child's needs and wishes. Continued contact with both parents is important in protecting the child from feeling abandoned and unloved. Yet a recent national study reports the startling finding that 40 percent of the children had no contact with their fathers over several years.

Of fathers who participated in our very brief counseling program, less than 10 percent failed to maintain contact with their children after a 5-year-period postseparation.

Good outcome is associated with more attenuated contact with a highly disturbed parent whose reality distortions or depression impact detrimentally on the child. This distancing from a disturbed parent represents an important contribution of divorce to the child's psychological health.

Children whose parents divorce may come to place a higher value on a stable marriage and home life. This emerges strikingly in our 10-year followup. As they enter adulthood, most of these young people are eager for a monogamous, lasting relationship. They eschew an impulsive marriage and marital infidelity. Most have decided that their parents decision to divorce was wise or inevitable, given their differences. Yet they are preoccupied with avoiding divorce for themselves and for the sake of their unborn children.

Quote: "I am in awe of people who stay together," said one 18-year-old. Most of these young people are law abiding and economically independent. Their resourcefulness, sense of virtue, and courage are often impressive at the moment they are entering young adulthood.

Given the long range perspective that our 10-year research affords, it appears that while divorce is severely stressful initially, it is not in and of itself detrimental to the child's future development. Eventual outcome for the child depends on the establishing of a stable, happier family in place of the marriage that failed.

An enlightened public policy can provide the economic, the legal, and the social safeguards that many families need in order to ease this very difficult transition.

Thank you very much.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Dr. Wallerstein.

[The prepared statement, along with questions and responses of Ms. Wallerstein, follows:]

STATEMENT OF

JUDITH S. WALLERSTEIN, PH.D.,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CENTER FOR THE FAMILY IN TRANSITION
CORTE MADERA, CALIFORNIA

BEFORE THE

FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

OF THE

UNITED STATES SENATE

March 22, 1983

NOTE: Some of this material is abstracted from Surviving the Breakup: How Children and Parents Cope with Divorce, Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan Berlin Kelly, Basic Books, New York, 1980.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIVORCING PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

Divorcing Parents Need Help

During the next decade, the expectable life cycle of a significant proporation of American families is likely to include divorce and remarriage. It is time to take their needs seriously - to provide help which will safeguard the children and provide guidance to their concerned parents. Our findings amply document the freestanding character of the nuclear family at these critical junctures, the striking unavailability of economic and social supports for the children, and the absence of resources for information and guidance. Parents who are uncertain about what to do have no reliable place to turn. Most cannot draw on their own personal histories for models in their new situation; there is little accumulated wisdom, and the many new roles of the visiting parent, joint custody, father custody, and stepparent are in the process of evolving - and the rules are not clearly defined. As a result, people are thrown back even more on the passions or anxieties of the moment in making decisions with long-range consequences for themselves and their children.

It is a curious phenomenon that family policy in this country has recognized the state's responsibility to offer services in family planning, for prospective children still unborn, but has left parents alone to deal with most of the issues that arise after the children are born. The time has come for a more realistic family policy, one that addresses the expectable metamorphoses of the American family and the stress points of change.

There are, of course, many stresses on the family in our society. The demands of the workplace often intrude into family life to the detriment of the marital relationship and to the detriment of the parent-child relationships. Yet, from the executive to the unskilled worker, we give priority to the workplace and fully expect the family to fall into line. This is true for the family in civilian life as well as for the military family.

The needs of families in acute and chronic crisis have also gone largely unrecognized and unserved. Families caught in disasters such as floods and fire, families caught in medical emergencies such as the diagnosis of a fatal illness in a child, families who experience bereavement, the chronic stresses of unemployment, financial need, of mental illness, of poor health, all of these impact on the marital relationship and on the intactness of the family. Yet, despite our longstanding knowledge of the connection between stress and marital rupture, we have developed very few programs which would safeguard the intactness of family life or would deal appropriately with the mental health needs of the individual members.

Divorcing parents face a bewildering array of tasks in putting their own lives in new and better order and in shaping the relationships of the postdivorce family. Many will need help in setting up postdivorce arrangements for the children and especially in arriving at the mutual understanding on which such arrangements must be based in order to endure. For people who have decided to separate from each other in sorrow and anger, joint planning is very difficult to achieve.

The Special Vulnerability of the Divorced Family

The developmental needs of children do not change in accord with changes in the family structure. Unfortunately, it appears clear that the divorced family is, in many ways, less adaptive economically, socially, and psychologically to the raising of children than the two-parent family. This does not mean that it cannot be done. The children in our study who made excellent progress attest to its feasibility and to the combination of heroic efforts of parents with the resiliency of children. And, as we have seen, where one or more children were of the age, the capacity, and the inclination to take responsibility for themselves and others and to contribute to the work and emotional support of the household, the divorced family provided not only a "good enough" milieu, but one that fostered maturity and mutual devotion between parent and child.

But, the fact remains that the divorced family in which the burden falls entirely, or mostly, on one parent is more vulnerable to stress, has limited economic and psychological reserves, and lacks the supporting or buffering presence of the other adult to help meet the crises of life - especially, as we have shown, the crises of physical or psychiatric illness. Even when two parents share custody and maintain their love and commitment to the children, the responsibility for raising the children usually devolves more on one parent than on the other and rarely, if ever, approaches the mutual support that parents provide for each other within the stable marriage. And, as we have reported, the chronic emotional and economic overload was frequently intolerable for the custodial parent, and the cumulative effect on the children was all too visible in their unhappiness and depression. Our considerable concern increased over the years as we became familiar with the extraordinary absence of supports in the social surround which appeared to be especially characteristic of so many middle-class families within our population.

This ongoing need of the child for competent, nurturant parenting places a continuing demand on the parent who assumes full or major responsibility for the child's upbringing. In order to fulfill the responsibility of childrearing and provide even minimally for the needs of the adult, many divorced families are in urgent need of a formal and informal network of services not now available to them in the community. The first steps toward easing the burdens of the parent and enhancing the quality of life within the family should include, our findings indicate, setting child support payments at a level that reflects realistically the cost of raising children; providing educational, vocational, and financial counseling combined with training and employment programs for adults returning to the economic or professional marketplace after a several-year absence; enriched child-care and after-school programs and facilities for children of various ages; as well as divorce-specific counseling programs. Although it is still not clear whether and to what extent supportive services are able to substitute for lacunae within the family structure, nevertheless, even if we regard such services as supplementary or secondary, the divorced family is at high risk when it stands alone.

Specific Recommendations

1. Preventive Counseling at the marital rupture and during the several-year aftermath. Families in the process of marital dissolution need access to affordable preventive counseling services staffed by well trained mental health professionals, at the time of the marital rupture and at critical times during the several years that follow, in order to help stabilize the new relationships within the postdivorce family in ways that will be beneficial to the children and in order to prevent or mitigate the consolidation of psychological difficulties in the children as a consequence of the marital rupture.

2. Mediation Services. Divorcing families need affordable mediation services available within the courts and/or the voluntary or the private sectors. These mediation services can help parents to avoid the adversarial process of the courts which tends to consolidate combative positions and prolong argument, and to arrive at an agreement which both parents can accept and implement. Mediation can also help to diminish the duration of the post-marital discord.

3. Improved Economic Support. Under the present system, the economic burden of divorce falls tragically on the children. Children who are in the custody of their mothers are in urgent need of an improved system of child support payments. Many fathers in all walks of life who can well afford to do so fail to support their children. A 1979 Bureau of the Census survey reports that only 43 percent of divorced or separated women receive child support payment. A sizeable number of fathers, as many as 50 percent, never make a single court ordered payment. Of those who do contribute to their children's support, the average amount paid is estimated to range from $1,800 to $2,430 a year which, according to a California study (Weitzman and Dixon, 1979), provides significantly less than one-half the cost of raising a child during those years. These amounts represent considerably less than it would cost to place a child in day care (Espenshade, 1980). Given that the average cost of raising a child in a a moderate income family is $4,000 for one child and $6,000 for two children, and $3,000 for one child and $4,500 for two in a low income family (Espenshade, 1980), the average child support award does not even come close to compensating a mother for the regular costs she has to bear,

and in no way for the extra costs. Thus, despite the fact that a mother earns considerably less than her former husband, she typically has to bear most or all of the extra child rearing costs by herself.

Few children of divorce maintain a standard of living comparable to that of the non-custodial parent during the postdivorce years. The impact of this disparity leaves a legacy which transcends simple economics. Changes in life style, a move to a new neighborhood and school because of sale of the family home, loss of friends and associates from the predivorce time, and the loss of the availability of the custodial parent who enters full-time work - all of these major life changes are associated with the decline in income which accompanies divorce. As children begin to assess the difference between the relatively secure and adequate life style of the non-custodial parent and that of the struggling to keep alive life style of the custodial parent, they can only wonder with bitterness and confusion about the reasons for these obvious disparities. Many conclude that they are little valued by their fathers.

4. Supportive Services. Divorced families are in urgent need of affordable quality child care and after-school care for children, school programs and teachers that are responsive to the needs of children in divorced families, churches and other community agencies that are responsive to the special needs of these families. Additionally, divorced families need respite facilities for weary single parents, family support centers for parents whose stress mounts so high that they are concerned that they may abuse their children, and a range of health, recreational, and social services for adults and children.

5. Specialized Counseling Services. Divorced families with children need specialized counseling services available within the community over the years that follow the divorce, in order to help parents and children address the expectable breakdowns and changes in child custody and visitation which occur during the growing up years of the children. Such services are not available at the present, and as a result, families usually turn to the courts for recourse or arrangements are made without adequate consideration of the needs of the children, the needs of the parents, and the changed circumstances. Such interventions require skilled, well trained mental health personnel.

6. Research. The need for increased knowledge of the family and the many issues of divorce and remarriage is very grave. Increased knowledge is urgently required in order to address the major legislative changes that are being considered within state legislatures throughout the United States. Overall, there is no body of knowledge which can inform the major policy decisions that are embodied in the legislation that is currently under consideration. Issues such as joint physical custody of the children, visitation of grandparents when such visits are not welcomed by one or both parents, mandatory mediation of child related disputes have hardly been studied. As a result, there is an insufficient body of knowledge which can inform the decisions. Without such knowledge, legislation which is enacted would appear to be an experiment involving millions of American children.

Additionally, research is urgently needed about a wide range of issues concerning the family. These include questions such as: What factors contribute to a happy and lasting marriage? What factors contribute to a happy and lasting remarriage? What are the major stress points in marriage and remarriage, and how do families that remain together address such stressful events? There is, furthermore, almost no systematic research about children below the age of three and how these very young children fare in divorce and remarriage, despite the fact that an increasing number of children in divorcing families fall within this very young age group. Overall, the agenda for research is far greater than the list of studies in hand or studies that are in process. Yet an enlightened family policy can only rest on a body of systematic knowledge.

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April 22, 1983

Honorable Jeremiah Denton
United States Senator
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Denton:

I very much appreciate the opportunity which you provided me to appear before the Subcommittee on Family and Human Services to present my findings on the effects of divorce on children.

I am enclosing the responses to the questions that you and Senator Dodd raised in your letter of April 1st.

I sincerely hope that the United States Senate will be able to consider the very serious issues that we face throughout the country in regard to children and parents in separated and divorced families.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Judith S. Wallerstein, Ph.D.

JSW:eb
Enclosures

QUESTIONS RAISED BY SENATOR DENTON

Question 1

"In your statement, you made several recommendations for improving the assistance w give to victims of divorce, both parents and children. Do you have any recommendations for preventive measures, for steps that might be taken to address the problem before divorce occurs?"

Response

There has been increasing professional and community interest in recent years in developing preventive programs that would reduce the instance of marital breakdown by addressing problems that arise within the marriage and by addressing, as well, stress in the environment that impacts on the marriage and the family. The development of such programs has been severely crippled by the cutbacks in funding for research and for services. Thus, under current guidelines of the Office of Management and Budget under the present Administration, divorce is considered "a social issue", and the study of divorce is not eligible for research funding. It is really quite extraordinary that no agency of the federal government, at the present time, is charged with the study of either marriage or divorce. The absence of sufficient knowledge about factors associated with a long-lasting marriage or about the stresses associated with marital breakdown seriously handicaps the development of preventive programs. Additionally, the unavailability of funds to launch and evaluate pilot or demonstration programs also seriously handicaps the development of preventive programs within existing facilities.

Question 2

"In one of your earlier papers you stated that, of the children you interviewed, only ten percent actually felt relieved at the time of their parents' divorce. At what age do children begin to accept their parents' divorce?"

Response

In the California Children of Divorce Study, it was found that ten percent of the children were relieved at the time of the parental divorce. These children were those who had witnessed overt conflict between their parents and had been frightened by the violence. Most children, at the time of the divorce, hope that their parents will be reunited, and this hope may last for many years past the marital breakup. Only gradually, as the children experience the post-divorce family or the remarried family as providing adequately for their needs, do they relinquish the hope that the intact family will be restored.

QUESTIONS RAISED BY SENATOR DODD

Question 1

"What knowledge do we still lack concerning the effects of divorce and conflict in marriage on children?"

Response

There are a great many lacks in our knowledge and understanding of the effects of divorce and conflict in marriage on children. There is evidence that children who are caught in overt conflict of their parents suffer very much and over the long run do better in divorce than they do when they remain in the conflicted marriage. But we have no knowledge about the effects of an unhappy marriage on children where the unhappiness may be experienced by the adults but not expressed in open conflict. There is a recent study by Gay Kitson, Sociologist at Case Western Reserve Medical School in the Department of Family Medicine, about the psychological and social adjustment of divorced people who reconcile. We lack any knowledge about the psychological and social adjustment of children in these families where the parents reconcile. Furthermore, there is evidence that a great many families separate and reunite informally without filing for dissolution of the marriage. There is no study that records the effect of repeated separations on children. We know considerably more about the effects of divorce on children than we do regarding the effects of an unhappy marriage which does not come to divorce. I have described these effects in my oral and written statements before the Subcommittee on Labor and Human Resources on March 22, 1983. But we lack entirely knowledge about an increasingly large group of children, namely children three years old and below. In a recent hand count of children in divorcing families in Marin County, California, we discovered that 26 percent of the children were three years old or below. In 1981, 13.6 percent of all children age three and under in the United States were living with their mother only. These very young children, especially infants and toddlers, are also more likely to be the object of dispute between their parents. We lack knowledge not only of the impact of divorce on these children but also of the impact of legal conflict between the parents. Since disputes between parents are increasingly settled in mediation, with joint physical custody arrangements that require young children to go back and forth between two homes, it is imperative that we acquire knowledge about the impact of such joint physical custody arrangements on young children.

Question 2

"What supports such as daycare or financial help do we need to provide for children whose parents are separating?"

Questions Raised by Senator Dodd (2)

Response

The economic consequences of divorce are grave, and the burden falls mostly on women and children. Delinquency in the regular payment of child support is widespread. A 1979 Bureau of the Census survey reports that only 43 percent of divorced or separated women receive child support payments. Weitzman and Dixon* found that the average amount paid for child support in a sample studied in California in 1972 and 1977 provided significantly less than one-half of the cost of raising children during those years. Various estimates of the median national child support payment range from $1,800 to $2,430. For those who do contribute to their children's financial support, the average amount estimated by Sawhill** is approximately $2,000, or considerably less than it would cost to place a child in a daycare center. To document this further, in Marin County, California, if the father earns $1,000 a month, the child support ordered will range between $100 and $150 a month; if the father earns $2,000 a month, his child support will range from $150 to $250 a month. Out of this, the father may deduct the cost attributable to children's medical insurance. The cost of daycare in the county ranges from $300 to $340 a month. Thus, even when paid regularly and in full, child support in our community would not cover half of the cost of child care and certainly not half of the cost of raising that child.

Very few women are awarded alimony or spousal support. Alimony or spousal support was awarded to only 17 percent of divorcing women in Los Angeles in 1977***. This accords with national estimates. Pointing to the special plight of the young child, Dr. Weitzman states, "Mothers of young children have experienced the sharpest decline in spousal support awards of any group of women under the new law. The new norm of self-sufficiency is being applied to young women whether they have minor children or not."*** Even when awarded and fully paid, the economic impact of spousal support is almost negligible. The median spousal support award in Los Angeles for a marriage of one to four years duration was $100 a month; for a marriage of five to nine years duration $149 a month***.

An additional hardship is the fact that the home in which the children have been residing is likely to be sold as part of the division of property under no-fault divorce legislation. Despite legislative and judicial authority in the state of California to exempt the home from immediate sale in order to protect the minor children. the prevailing pattern is for the court to order the house sold. "The presence of minor children does not increase the likelihood that the wife will be awarded the family home."* To complete the sorry economic picture, in 1979 the median family income in female-headed households was $9,927 a year compared with the median family income of the husband-wife household of $21,503.

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* Weitzman, L.J. and Dixon, R.B. "Child Custody Awards: Legal Standards and Empirical Patterns for Child Custody, Support and Visitation After Divorce," University of California Davis Law Review, 12:xxx, 1979, pp. 473-521.

** Sawhill, I. "Developing Normative Standards for Child Support and Alimony Payments." Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, April 1981, pp. 1-2.

*** Weitzman, L.J. "The Economics of Divorce: Social and Economic Consequences of Property, Alimony and Child Support Awards," UCLA Law Review, Vol. 28, No. 6, August 1981, pp. 1181-1268.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Young children are at high risk in separating and divorced families over a several-year period because of multiple, acutely stressful changes coincident with disrupted, diminished, or skewed parenting. Child care facilities provide essential supplementary care for these children whose parents usually work full time out of economic necessity. Although children from divorced families make up a large proportion of the population in child care facilities, and often comprise one-half to three-quarters of the children, these programs, in the main, fail utterly to address the specific needs of these youngsters or their parents. Except for individual instances of care givers or teachers who are able to draw on special intuitive understanding or compassion, the care giving and teaching staff is often bewildered, overwhelmed, or angered by the thorny management problems which these troubled children present, and as often bewildered, overwhelmed, or angered by the open neediness, anxiety, and drivenness of their parents. Moreoever, there appears to be little or no adaptation of structure or program to the needs of the divorced family.

The cost of child care is excessively high for many, if not most, divorced parents. Given the widespread delinquency in child support payments by fathers and the very limited court ordered spousal support, especially for young women, the cost of quality child care often imposes a severe economic burden which draws needed resources from other important domains of family life. These sacrifices imposed by the unresponsiveness of society to the child care needs of the single parent who must work have serious consequences for the child and for family life. The frustrations and resentments that single parents experience so frequently are likely to reverberate within the parent-child relationship. Young children are in special jeopardy under these circumstances because having already been rendered vulnerable by the family breakup, their need for sensitive, nurturant, reliable continuing care is crucial to their development.

Our findings amply document the freestanding nature of the young family at these critical junctures, the relative absence of social supports, the vulnerability of the family to the potential impact of social and economic stress, the long-term implications of the divorce experience for children when the family disintegrates following the divorce or fails to fulfill its child-rearing functions in ways sufficient for the development needs of the child. The continued resistance of our society to allocate resources to provide the needed economic, social, and psychological help for its children and their parents at the stress points of family change has tragic consequences for individual children and their parents, as well as for the entire community.

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* Weitzman, L.J. "The Economics of Divorce: Social and Economic Consequences of property, Alimony and Child Support Awards," UCLA Law Review, Vol. 28, No. 6, August 1981, pp. 1181-1268.

Senator DENTON. Dr. Zill.

Mr. ZILL. Senator Denton, I would like to present some results, briefly, of a national study of marital disruption and then give you some policy recommendations based on that study.

This research was done in collaboration with Dr. James Peterson of Child Trends and Professor Frank Furstenberg of the University of Pennsylvania. It was sponsored by the Foundation for Child Development in New York, and the National Institute of Mental Health. However, the opinions that I express are solely my own.

I also began my formal statement with a parade of statistics, so I will spare you that, except to point out that Dr. Nicholi's statement of 13 million children living in non-two-parent families is an underestimate.

Our estimates, based on census data and our own work, are that right now 22.5 million young people, or 36 percent of all children under 18, are living in something other than the traditional two-parent family.

This figure includes 11.4 million children living with their mothers only, 1.2 million with their fathers, 6.4 million with one biological parent and one step parent, 1.3 million with two adopted parents, 1.9 million with grandparents or other relatives, and 350,000 living with foster parents, with other nonrelatives, or in institutions.

Now, what are the effects——

Senator DENTON. Did you say 26 percent of all children?

Mr. ZILL. Thirty-six percent.

Senator DENTON. Thirty-six?

Mr. ZILL. That is right, more than a third.

Senator DENTON. And if we take into consideration that some of those who are for the moment endowed with two parents are only temporarily so endowed. So it gets very interesting.

Mr. ZILL. That is right. You see, the Census Bureau lumps together all two-parent families and does not differentiate between step-parents and adoptive parents, and you have to make some estimates of those to get the complete picture.

All right. What are the effects of separation and divorce and a single-parent upbringing on the children involved? The conventional view with regard to divorce is that it is inevitably traumatic for children and scars them for life.

A majority of both parents and adolescent children in the United States still seem to subscribe to this viewpoint. When we asked parents and teenagers in 1981, as part of the National Survey of Children, whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "When parents divorce, children develop permanent emotional problems," 56-percent, a majority—excuse me. A 56-percent majority of the parents agreed or strongly agreed with that statement, and 64 percent of the teenagers also agreed that divorce creates permanent emotional problems.

However, within those families that had actually been through a separation and divorce, the proportions were somewhat lower: 42 percent of the parents and 51 percent of the children agreed with the statement.

I would also like to point out that a 58-percent majority of the teenagers agreed with the statement, "It should be easy for unhappy couples to get a divorce." So clearly there is some ambivalence in public attitudes about this topic.

Research evidence from the National Survey of Children and other studies of marital disruption indicates that some children do indeed develop serious emotional and behavioral problems as a result of parental separation or divorce. For example, more than 30 percent of the teenagers in our survey whose parents had separated or divorced by the time the children were 7 years old had received therapy by the time they were adolescents.

By contrast, only 10 percent of those in intact families received some sort of psychotherapy by adolescence; 15 percent of teenagers living with divorced single mothers had been suspended or expelled from school at some point between elementary school and high school. Only 3 percent of teenagers from intact, low-conflict families had been suspended or expelled during the same interval.

Now, the evidence also suggests, however, that for most of the children who develop problems in response to divorce, the adverse effects are not permanent, but show substantial improvement over time, given a stable postdivorce situation. Moreover, the data show that persistent conflicts within an intact family can be just as detrimental to children as divorce, if not more so.

For example, in our survey, 17 percent of the teenagers from intact families where there was a persistent high level of conflict had also been suspended or expelled from school.

Many children seem to weather the stress of marital discord without any significant psychological consequences, even over the short term. We are beginning to develop a better understanding of the factors that differentiate the children who do develop the disturbances from those that do not.

A number of factors are involved. They include the age and sex of the child, the intensity and duration of the parental conflict, the emotional well being of the custodial parent. We find that children whose parents divorce before they are age 7 are at considerably greater risk than those whose parents divorce after 7.

We find that boys are at greater risk than girls. We find that, not surprisingly, the more intense and long lasting the fight, the conflict between the parents, the greater the risk.

Recent research suggests that the quality of the child's relationship with his or her parents may be one of the most important factors in the postdivorce adjustment of the child. If the child is able to maintain good relationships with both parents, despite the differences between them, then the prospects for normal emotional and social development are enhanced. The worst outcomes seem to occur when the child becomes alienated from both parents as a result of the conflict. Having rejected both parental models, such children are more apt to be poorly socialized, increasing the chances of antisocial behavior.

Unfortunately, our data suggest that only about one child in five who has been through separation or divorce is able to maintain a good relationship with both parents. However, a majority of the children who have experienced separation or divorce, about 57 percent, are at least able to maintain a close relationship with their mothers. Only about one-third have a positive relationship with the absent father.

The comparable figures for teenagers in intact families are 55 percent who have a good relationship with both parents—not all of them, by any means—69 percent who are close to their mothers, and 66 percent with their fathers. This is based on the teenager's own report.

Marital conflict is one source of behavioral disturbance in children, but it is not the only source.

Senator DENTON. Excuse me. I cannot help asking this question, Dr. Zill. If you asked a child of separated or divorced parents whether he or she is relatively close to them or to their mother and the father, would they not be disposed to base their reply on a different basis of relativity than the child who is living with both of his or her parents?

Mr. ZILL. No. These figures are based on two questions. We asked them how close they felt to the mother and how close they felt to the father, and then how much they wanted to be like the parents when they were adults themselves. And one of the things we found, for example, was that 71 percent of children in the long-term divorce situation did not want to be like their fathers when they were grownups.

And it is not surprising that there is this alienation, because, as Judy Wallerstein mentioned, many of those fathers are not seeing the children and not providing any support. But those questions were the basis of the figures I cited.

Now, as I was saying, marital conflict is not the only source of behavioral disturbance. The traumatic loss of both parents early in a child's life and the repeated disruption of family ties are other experiences that seem to increase the risk. Relatively high proportions of foster children and adopted children who have had to endure stressful occurrences such as these show conduct problems during middle childhood and adolescence.

Being raised by a mother who is unresponsive or barely able to meet her parental responsibilities because of chronic depression or physical disability is still another cause of behavioral difficulties. Unfortunately, the number of children who are growing up in such circumstances is not insignificant, particularly among black children in the inner cities.

We find that growing up in a single-parent home may not be so bad if the single parent possesses other qualities that make for a nurturant family environment; namely, a good education, adequate financial resources, a positive attitude toward parenthood, and freedom from physical or emotional disability. It also helps if the lone parent can get emotional support and practical assistance from relatives, friends, or the nonresident parent.

Unfortunately, the realities of life in the single-parent family are often quite different from this ideal. Family assets tend to go together; so do family liabilities. The child who has one risk factor going against him is likely to face other risks as well. In particular, the child who is born to a high school dropout mother is more likely than other children to start out or wind up in a single-parent household. He or she is also more likely to be living in impoverished circumstances, with more than the average number of siblings, and with a mother who is often tense or depressed and has negative attitudes about being a parent.

Reducing the number of children who must grow up in such multiple-risk families should be the highest priority for programs that aim to improve the lot of children.

This goal of reducing those multiple-risk families is by no means a utopian dream. In fact, during the 1970's we had progress toward that goal despite the increase in single-parent families. We had progress because there was a reduction in family size, and there was a substantial increase in parent education, particularly among black Americans.

For example, between 1970 and 1979, because poor and minority women were having fewer babies, the average number of children in welfare families went from three children to two children, a very substantial reduction.

Furthermore, we have had a substantial increase in the proportion of single mothers who are high school graduates or who have had some college education. These are positive trends that we do not hear enough about. The inner-city child of today is more likely to be living in a single-parent family, that is true, but today's child usually has a better educated mother and a smaller number of siblings than yesterday's inner-city child had.

In addition, today's child is less likely to have been the result of an unwanted pregnancy. I want to point out, before we indulge in too much gloom and doom, that the divorce rate is still very high, and yet we are seeing some positive trends. We are seeing a reduction in the crime rate. We are seeing a reduction in teenage use of marihuana and other drugs. We are seeing some increase in educational achievement in the inner cities and on college board tests.

Senator DENTON. Some of those are relatively recent, as the previous witnesses have testified.

Mr. ZILL. That is correct. But the notion that things are just going to get worse and worse and that we will see the end of the family shortly after the turn of the century seems to me quite exaggerated.

Let me briefly make some policy recommendations. There are a number of things that public agencies and private organizations could be doing. These include efforts aimed at reducing the number of children who must grow up in multiple-risk families, getting absent fathers to contribute more money and time to their children, providing resources and services to help keep existing families with children functioning harmoniously, and discouraging the formation of families that are at risk from the outset.

Now, because of time limitations, I will skip over some of the details, except that I would like to harp a little on the theme of those absent fathers. The lives of many children growing up in single-parent homes would be improved if the absent fathers of these children could be persuaded, forced, or in some cases, simply allowed to assume some responsibility for their offspring.

As things stand now, a majority of American children who live in single-parent families have virtually no contact with their biological fathers and receive little or no financial support from those fathers. This lack of participation by fathers deprives children of paternal companionship and guidance, which most youngsters crave. In many instances, it means significant material deprivation, if not outright poverty for the family.

And it adds to the financial burden on all taxpaying citizens because without support from the fathers, single mothers often turn to the Government for assistance, at least temporarily. The Federal Government does have a child support enforcement program in operation. But the program is designed primarily to reimburse the Government for welfare expenditures. It does not improve the financial status of most of the children who live in female-headed families.

I think new procedures are called for, such as a federally administered child support system that would be authorized to make deductions from the wages of absent parents. Moreover, there should be provisions for beginning support payments and income withholding as soon as the separation or birth out of wedlock has occurred. A legal divorce or a court order of child support should not be required to set the process in motion.

As important as the issue of how to get separated fathers to provide financial support is the question of how to keep these fathers psychologically involved. We find that the two questions are not unrelated. Fathers who see their children are more likely to provide monetary support. I think educational efforts and changes in family law are needed to get absent fathers to give of their time as well as their money.

Finally, just to wrap up, I would like to say that our research does support the traditional belief that the best thing for a child's mental health is to grow up with two parents who are together in a harmonious marriage. Therefore, if we want to benefit children, we should think about policies to make happily married parenting more possible in the future.

And we should pay attention to those children who are in intact high-conflict families as well as those who are in single-parent families.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Zill follows:]

DIVORCE, MARITAL CONFLICT, AND CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Nicholas Zill, Ph.D.
Child Trends, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

Testimony prepared for the Subcommittee on Family and Human Services, U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, March 22, 1983.

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THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Of all the social changes that have affected children's lives in recent decades, none has generated more attention and concern than the growth of single-parent families. According to Census figures, the proportion of children under 18 who were living in single-parent households doubled between 1960 and 1981, going from less than one child in ten to one child in five. For much of human history, substantial numbers of children experienced the loss of one or both parents. But the usual cause of family disruption in the past was the death of a parent. Now the reasons are more likely to be separation, divorce, or birth out of wedlock.

The number of children living with divorced mothers more than doubled between 1970 and 1981, going from 2.3 million to 4.9 million. Over the same time period, the number of children living with mothers who had never married more than tripled, going from just over half a million in 1970 to 1.8 million in 1981. These increases took place during a decade when the total number of children in the United States decreased by 9 percent, from 69 million to 63 million; and the number living with widowed mothers declined by about 16 percent, going from 1.4 to 1.2 million.

Of course, many single parents remarry (or get married for the first time), so the total number of children who spend some portion of their childhood in a single-parent household is considerably larger than the number who live with only one parent at any given point in time. Indeed, as of 1981, about 22-1/2 million young people -- or 36 percent of all U.S. children under 18 -- were living in something other than the traditional two-parent family. This figure includes 11.4 million children living with their mothers only; 1.2 million with their fathers only; 6.4 million with one biological parent and one stepparent; 1.3 million with two adoptive parents; 1.9 million with grandparents or other relatives; and 350 thousand living with foster parents, with other non-relatives, or in institutions.

Divorce rates now appear to be levelling off and perhaps even declining, at least temporarily. Nevertheless, it still seems prudent to assume that between 40 and 50 percent of the children born during the 1970s and early 1980s will spend part or all of their youth in a single-parent household or other non-conventional living arrangement. For black children in the United States, it is already the case that living with two parents is less common than living with one parent only.

CHILDREN AT RISK

What are the effects of separation, divorce, and a single-parent upbringing on the children involved? The conventional view with regard to divorce is that it is inevitably traumatic for children and scars them for life. A majority of both parents and adolescent children in the United States still seem to subscribe to this viewpoint. In

1981, as part of the National Survey of Children, the parents of a nationwide sample of 12-16 year olds were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "When parents divorce, children develop permanent emotional problems." A 56 percent majority of the parents in the survey said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. When the teenagers were given the same question, a 64 percent majority of them agreed that divorce creates permanent emotional problems for children. Within those families that had actually been through a separation or divorce, lower proportions agreed with the statement: 42 percent of the parents and 51 percent of the children. On the other hand, a 58 percent majority of all of the teenagers agreed with the statement: "It should be easy for unhappy couples to get a divorce."

Research evidence from the National Survey of Children and other studies of marital disruption indicates that some children do indeed develop serious emotional and behavioral problems as a result of parental separation or divorce. For example, more than thirty percent of the teenagers in the National Survey of Children whose parents had separated or divorced by the time the children were 7 years old had received psychological therapy by the time they were adolescents. By contrast, only 10 percent of all teenagers in intact families had received such therapy. Fifteen percent of teenagers living with divorced single mothers had been suspended or expelled from school at some point between elementary school and high school. Only 3 percent of teenagers from low-conflict intact families had been suspended or expelled during the same interval.

However, the evidence also suggests that for most of the children who develop problems in response to divorce, the adverse effects are not permanent, but show substantial improvement over time, given a stable post-divorce situation. Moreover, the data show that persistent conflict within an intact family can be just as detrimental to children as divorce, if not more so. For example, in the National Survey of Children, 17 percent of teenagers in intact families where there was persistent high conflict had been suspended or expelled from school versus the 3 percent of those from low-conflict intact families who had had similar disciplinary problems.

Many children seem to weather the stress of marital discord without any significant psychological consequences, even over the short-term. We are beginning to develop a better understanding of the factors that differentiate the children who do develop psychological disturbances in response to family stress from those who do not. A number of factors are involved, including the age and sex of the child, the intensity and duration of the parental conflict, and the emotional well-being of the custodial parent. Recent research suggests that the quality of the childs' relations with his or her parents may be one of the most important factors in the post-divorce adjustment of the child. If the child is able to maintain good relationships with both parents despite the differences between them, then the prospects for normal emotional and social development are enhanced. The worst outcomes seem to occur among children who become alienated from both of their parents as a result of marital conflict. Having rejected both parental models, such children are more apt to be poorly socialized, increasing the chances of antisocial behavior.

Unfortunately, our data suggest that only about one child in five whose parents have been separated or divorced is able to maintain a good relationship with both parents during adolescence. However, a majority of the children who have experienced separation or divorce -- about 57 percent -- are at least able to maintain a close relationship with their mothers. Only about a third have a positive relationship with their absent fathers. The comparable figures for teenagers in intact families are 55 percent who have a close relationship with both parents and 69 percent who have a close, positive relationship with their mothers, and 66 percent, with their fathers.

Marital conflict is one source of behavioral disturbance in children. But it is not the only familial source of child behavior problems. The traumatic loss of both parents early in a child's life and the repeated disruption of family ties are other experiences that seem to increase the risk of behavioral disturbance. Relatively high proportions of foster children and adopted children who have had to endure stressful occurrences such as these show conduct problems during middle childhood and adolescence.

Being raised by a mother who is unresponsive and barely able to meet her parental responsibilities because of chronic depression or physical disability is still another source of behavioral difficulties in children. Unfortunately, the number of U.S. children who are growing up in such circumstances is not insignificant, particularly among black children in the inner cities. Chronic depression and negative attitudes about parenthood are relatively common among poorly educated mothers who have their first children as unwed teenagers and then remain unmarried through their children's school years.

Growing up in a single-parent home may not be so bad for a child if the single parent possesses other qualities that make for a nurturant family environment, namely a good education, adequate financial resources, a positive attitude towards parenthood, and freedom from physical or emotional disability. It also helps if the lone parent can get emotional support and practical assistance from relatives, friends, or the non-resident parent. Unfortunately, the realities of life in a single-parent family are often quite different from this ideal.

Family assets tend to go together. So do family liabilities. The child who has one risk factor going against him is likely to face other risks as well. In particular, the child who is born to a high-school dropout mother is more likely than other children to start out or wind up in a single-parent household. He or she is also more apt to be living in impoverished circumstances, with more than the average number of siblings, and with a mother who is often tense or depressed and has negative attitudes about being a parent. Reducing the number of children who must grow up in such multiple-risk families should be the highest priority for programs that aim to improve the lot of children.

A significant reduction in the proportion of U.S. children who grow up in multiple-risk families is by no means an unattainable goal. Indeed, despite the rise in single-parent households, some notable progress toward this goal was made during the 1970s. For example, primarily because poor and minority women were having fewer babies, the average number of children in families receiving welfare payments (i.e., Aid to Families with Dependent Children) in the United States shrank from approximately three children in 1970 to two children in 1979.

There was also a marked improvement in the average educational attainment of young mothers living apart from a husband during the 1970s. The proportion of children under 18 in mother-only families whose mothers had at least completed high school rose from a minority of 45 percent in 1970 to a majority of 60 percent in 1979. The proportion whose mothers had at least one year of college training doubled during this period, going from 10 percent in 1970 to 21 percent in 1979. Part of this change may have been due to an increase in the prevalence of marital separation and divorce among better educated women in the United States. But a more important factor was the increase in educational attainment across successive cohorts of Americans, particularly black Americans. To illustrate the magnitude of these educational changes: the proportion of black adults aged 25-29 who had completed at least four years of high school rose from 56 percent to 75 percent between 1970 and 1979.

Thus, although the inner-city child of today is more likely to be living in a single-parent family than was the comparable child of an earlier generation, today's child usually has a better educated mother and a smaller number of siblings than yesterday's inner-city child had. In addition, today's child is less likely to have been the result of an unwanted pregnancy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a number of things that public agencies and private organizations could be doing to help insure that more children will be raised in supportive family environments; whether the children live with one parent or two. These include efforts aimed at:

--reducing the number of children who must grow up in multiple-risk families;

--getting absent fathers to contribute more money and time to their children;

--providing resources and services to help keep existing families with children functioning harmoniously; and

--discouraging the formation of families that are at risk from the outset.

Reducing The Number of Multiple-Risk Families

A further reduction in the number of children being raised in extremely unfavorable family environments can be accomplished both by programs designed to lower the risks in the child's family environment, and by programs designed to discourage births to parents who cannot at present provide a favorable childrearing environment. For teenagers and young adults who have not yet had children, the goals for public and private agencies should be to provide them with the knowledge, services, and motivation to avoid unwanted or unplanned pregnancies, and to encourage them to delay their childbearing until they have achieved some measure of emotional maturity and financial independence. This means that existing programs that provide contraceptive counseling, remedial instruction, and job training to teenagers and young adults should be maintained and strengthened. And it means that new programs should be developed that provide young women with other, more positive options than publicly subsidized motherhood.

These programs should focus on teenagers who are doing poorly in school and on young adults who have not completed high school. The children born to these young women and men are more likely than other children to start out or wind up in single-parent households. They are also more apt to grow up in impoverished circumstances, and to receive relatively little intellectual stimulation or emotional support from their parents.

Once a child is born into a high-risk family environment, public and private agencies should actively encourage the mother to delay or avoid additional pregnancies and to assist her in doing the best job she can in raising the child or children she already has. Special efforts are required to design parent education and support services that are suitable for poorly educated parents and to recruit high-risk parents to take advantage of these services. Results showing better adjustment among the children of employed single mothers suggest that job training and subsidized employment programs for welfare mothers, far from being detrimental to the well-being of their children, may actually be beneficial to the mental health and development of children in single-parent families.

Getting Fathers To Contribute

The lives of many children growing up in single-parent homes would be improved if the absent fathers of these children could be persuaded, forced, or, in some cases, simply allowed to assume some responsibility for their offspring. As things stand now, a majority of American children who live with divorced, separated, or never-married mothers have virtually no contact with their biological fathers and receive no financial support from those fathers. This lack of participation by fathers who live apart from their children deprives children of paternal companionship and guidance, which most youngsters crave. In many instances, it means significant material deprivation, if not outright poverty, for the family. And it adds to the financial burden on all taxpaying citizens because, without support from the fathers, single mothers often turn to the government for assistance, at least temporarily.

The federal government has a Child Support Enforcement program in operation, but the program is designed primarily to reimburse the government for welfare expenditures. It does not improve the financial status of most of the children who live in female-headed families. New procedures are called for, such as a federally administered child support system that would be authorized to make deductions from the wages of absent parents. Moreover, there should be provisions for beginning support payments -- and income withholding -- as soon as a separation or birth out of wedlock has occurred. A legal divorce or court order of child support should not be required to set the process in motion.

As important as the issue of how to get separated fathers to provide financial support for their children is the question of how to keep these fathers psychologically involved in the rearing of their children. The two questions are not unrelated. The survey data show that fathers who see their children regularly are more likely to furnish monetary support than fathers who see their children only rarely or not at all.

Educational efforts and changes in family law are needed to get absent fathers to give of their time as well as their money. In divorce cases involving children, the presumption of the court should be that both parents will share the task of childcare, except in instances where such an arrangement would clearly be detrimental to the well-being of the children. Regular contact with the children by both parents should be seen not merely as a matter of "visitation rights," but as a matter of parental duty. Although truly cooperative childrearing by divorced parents is a rare phenomenon, it seems perfectly possible for "parallel" childrearing to take place, wherein divorced parents maintain reasonably satisfactory relationships with their children while having relatively little to do with each other.

Keeping Families Together

Improving the life circumstances of children who do not reside with both parents must be a high priority for child welfare programs. But reformers and policy makers should also note that the survey data support a rather traditional viewpoint with respect to children and families. The data reinforce the belief that the best thing for a child's mental health is to be living with both biological parents who remain together in a reasonably happy marriage. Other family situations may not be as bad as they are sometimes portrayed, but none seems quite as good for children's social and emotional development as a harmonious two-parent family. Thus, if we really want to benefit children, we should be asking what policies or programs might help to increase the chances that current and future generations will be raised by happily-married parents.

This goal will not be accomplished by simply reinstating the onerous divorce laws of the past. Making it difficult for married couples to obtain a divorce may reduce marital disruption, but it does not promote harmony and cooperation. As we have seen, we would not be doing children any great favor by forcing their parents to stay together no matter how badly the parents might be getting along with each other.

On the other hand, it does seem reasonable to expect that married couples with children would make an earnest effort to resolve their differences before being granted a legal separation or divorce. Even seemingly irreconcilable disputes between marriage partners can sometimes be worked out with the help of a third party. Follow-up data on adolescents who have experienced family stress in middle childhood suggest that a temporary period of conflict between parents is less of a threat to a child's emotional well-being than is persistent conflict or family disruption.

At a minimum, then, marriage counseling, mediation, and other supportive services for families experiencing conflict should be readily available to parents from all education and income levels. There should be procedures for educating parents who are considering separation or divorce about the risks they and their children will be facing. Parents who are not getting along with one another should be encouraged, and perhaps even required by law, to try to resolve their disagreements through mediation and counseling before embarking on divorce proceedings.

It would also be helpful if welfare and tax laws could be restructured so as to provide more incentives for couples with children to remain together, rather than furnishing financial assistance and social services only after a disruption has already occurred. For example, some but not all states have a program whereby two-parent families with unemployed fathers can receive AFDC payments. This program should be implemented in all states.

Making Better Marriages

In addition to providing resources and services that can help to keep existing families with children functioning harmoniously, efforts should be directed at preventing the formation of families that are at risk from the outset. This goal is not as utopian as it sounds. There is, in fact, already one trend in progress that may help to produce more stable marriages in the near future. This is the tendency for today's young women and men to remain single longer and to have their first children at later ages. On the average, couples who marry at later ages are more likely to remain married than those who wed in their teens or early twenties. Hence, the trend toward later marriage and childbearing should be good news for the children that are produced from these unions. Indeed, one positive step that public and private agencies could be taking to benefit future generations of children would be to mount educational campaigns and other efforts not only to discourage teenagers from becoming pregnant, but to encourage more young people to wait until they are in their late twenties or early thirties before having children. Of course, many early and unstable marriages are precipitated by unintended pregnancies, so education and family planning services to prevent unplanned or unwanted pregnancies are relevant here as well.

Additional research is needed on the factors that lead to stable or unstable marriages. The results of this research should be made available to teenagers and young adults, and to their parents, teachers, and counselors, in easily understandable and readily usable form. It should be possible, for example, to develop actuarial tables or computer programs that would provide prospective couples with a statistical estimate of the "life expectancy" of their marriage, given some basic descriptive information about each of the partners. Data on the odds in favor or against a given marriage surviving for a specified period of time would be needed if various "divorce insurance" programs that have been proposed were to be put into effect.

There is no guarantee that young people would make use of such information to choose their marriage partners with any greater wisdom than they do now, of course. However, the recent declines in teenage smoking and marijuana use suggest that if young people are furnished with credible information about the relative risks involved in various courses of action, at least some of them will change their behavior accordingly. Although matrimonial decisions will probably always have a large irrational component -- and many would not want to have it otherwise -- couples who insist on entering into high-risk unions should at least do so with their eyes open, particularly if there are to be children involved.

Senator **Denton**. Thank you, Dr. Zill. Dr. Wallerstein, it is apparent that although you focused your testimony, as you are professionally focused, on the advising of families in transition, as you say, you seemed to be nodding when Dr. Zill indicated that if we can, we ought to do all we are capable of to address situations which seem to promote divorce or separation or conflict. That, of course, is Dr. Nicholi's belief, too.

And there does seem to be a difference in point of view among you on a number of things, particularly the effect on the child, so I would ask if the three of you would care to direct questions to one another here for a few moments. It seems to me, for example, that Dr. Nicholi's assessment of the effect on children is a bit less optimistic than that of the other two. That is my own observation.

If it is not true, then perhaps you do not want to ask one another questions.

Ms. **Wallerstein**. I do not think that there is a difference of opinion as much as a difference in the population that we are looking at.

Senator **Denton**. Yes.

Ms. **Wallerstein**. Dr. Nicholi is a psychiatrist, and he is looking at patients. And I think I have gone out of my way to look at a range of familes in a normal population in which we are seeing different responses.

Senator **Denton**. Yes, that is true, too. All right, then, do you feel that way too, Dr. Zill, or go ahead, Dr. Nicholi, if you care to comment.

Mr. **Nicholi**. I think that is correct, that it is a difference of emphasis. I am caught up every day with the——

Senator **Denton**. The problems, yes.

Mr. **Nicholi** [continuing]. And of course, my focus is on that. I agree with, really, everything that has been said by my two colleagues here, and I think I would just like to make some comment about what I think is underlying all of this. So much of our questions or our statements are directed toward what to do once the family has disolved. I think we need a lot of research to understand what it is that makes families stay together, that makes them somehow—though they all have conflicts. We all know that. Regardless of how ideal a relationship is, it is going to be plagued with difficulties and conflict.

And why it is that some people can make the effort to work them out and others not. I think that there are two things that I wanted to add here. One is that there seems to be something in our society that is developing that indicates there is a low degree of tolerance for stress, that somehow—and I do not know what the factors are that cause this. But in the huge segment of our population that is now involved in the inhaling, ingesting, injecting, a wide variety of psychoactive drugs, that when you now talk to them about why they take them, they say it is to deal with feelings of stress, of boredom, of loneliness, of frustration, and so forth.

And the tendency is that if there is any stress, we need to run away from it, to get away from it as quickly as possible. I think that holds true in a marriage.

The other point that I wanted to make is that there is something lacking in our basic understanding of what is involved in human relationships. And it seems to me that one of the things that we have not fully understood is that every relationship demands emotional and physical accessibility to one another; that the father in this country has never been home very much anyway, and now the mother, rather than bringing the father in, has gone out to join him, which I think makes them less emotionally accessible to one another; that I think is not an insignificant contribution to their getting divorced, as well as both of them not being emotionally accessible to their children.

Senator DENTON. And we seem to explain that away in economic terms in order to obtain a home or two cars or whatever. We say you have to have two wage earners, and that the stresses of modern society are increased this or that way. I think back to the days when the colonists were just maintaining a beachhead, as it were, on the east coast, and they must have had quite a few stresses. They starved to death by the droves in Jamestown and in Massachusetts, for that matter. And they had hostile Indians. They had a hostile climate. So it is difficult for me to make that rationalization that stresses have brought about or have increased in intensity. But I need education in that, I am sure. I think they may have changed their form, and then I think we may have changed, too, our estimate of what constitutes the essentials and the necessary luxuries of life, which in turn drive one or the other out to make more money.

Will you comment on that?

Ms. WALLERSTEIN. I think there is a lot of stress on the family and I think a significant part of that stress comes from the workplace. It is fully expected that the family will accommodate the demands of the workplace rather than the workplace accomodate the needs of the family. We see this in regard to the civilian family and the military family. And martial rupture is high in both the civilian and the military population.

Senator DENTON. I do not want to interrupt you. I want you to continue. By no means did I mean to imply that there should not be policy which accommodates, in so far as is feasible, the demands of the workplace on the family. And I agree with all of you on the need to develop some means to force or allow fathers who have abandoned the mother with children to pay some kind of support.

Is not much of this an attitudinal question, though, reflected sometimes in the way the two contract marriage, in the commitment to responsibilities rather than to enjoyment.

Ms. WALLERSTEIN. Only a minority of divorced women receive child support. Delinquency is very high. But some men are doing that which the court has ordered them to do. I interviewed a father who is earning $200,000 a year. His payments to his 14-year-old daughter had been set by the court when he was a medical student at $150 a month. He pays this regularly. Now he is a successful surgeon. Yet there are no plans for an increase in the payments related either to the increased cost of living, the changed economic circumstances of the father, or the age of the child. Child support is set at the time of the divorce and then kept that way unless people go back to court. Most people do not return to court. They do not have the emotional or the financial resources to do so.

Senator **Denton**. Well, I know one man very well who pays without a court decree half of what he makes for child support. He would not be required to do anything like that. He is not that wealthy, but he does it because of a sense of obligation toward his children who are living with the mother.

In other words, it would seem to me that there is a values question here among the individuals in our society. Perhaps the emphasis on values has not been quite as it should have been during this revolutionary period of the increase in divorces.

Is there any possible support for that among you?

Mr. **Zill**. Actually, we know surprisingly little about fathers in general and about their attitudes. It is an area where we need a good deal more research. I think on this whole question about attitudes about the family, we should recognize that while there is more stress on the family, perhaps, it is also true that we are demanding more of the family. We have higher standards of marital relationships. You mentioned before, Senator, about infidelity. Well, in the past, women were expected to tolerate their husbands' infidelities. That was a fairly routine kind of procedure. That has changed now.

The woman often wants as much from the marriage as the husband does. And so, some of what we are seeing comes not from the stress on the family, but from higher standards for the family. Furthermore, we should recognize that, here again, there are some good things going on. Age at a marriage is one of the correlates of marital stability. People who are more mature when they get married tend to remain married longer. It does not always apply, but the fact that many young people are postponing their first marriage and their first child bearing is, I think, a positive change that is going on right now.

Senator **Denton**. Well, flaunting infidelity, I think, a woman would never in any age tolerate. Hell hath no fury than that of a woman scorned. I have had to counsel families in the Navy, and although out of perhaps 100 divorces with which I was personally involved and which the counseling failed, although infidelity was not mentioned in the court, it was existing to a very great degree often as a primary cause of divorce. It was not mentioned, but was something that caused a great deal of pain and took its outlet in expressions regarding other faults or alleged faults that the couple found in one another.

Ms. **Wallerstein**. Infidelity was a major cause for divorce in less than a third of the divorces that we have seen.

Senator **Denton**. By their testimony?

Ms. **Wallerstein**. We see these people in individual counseling. The conversation is private and confidential. Each person is talking about the other, as well as about himself or herself. So I think it is reliable. The central complaints that people have are that they feel unloved, unappreciated, and lonely in the marriage. Infidelity is not a major complaint.

And they are expecting, as Dr. Zill says, that we are expecting more of marriage, and I think that is not so bad.

Senator **Denton**. Expecting more not less.

Ms. **Wallerstein**. That is right.

Mr. Zill. But, on the other hand, the data show that the children can do pretty well in a moderately conflictful marriage. So, in a sense, in pursuing our own holy grail of meaningful relationships, we are to some extent causing hurt to the children.

Senator Denton. To the three of you, then, a permissive attitude toward sex outside of marriage is not that serious a factor with respect to unhappiness and divorce.

Mr. Nicholi. I do not think we are saying that at all.

Senator Denton. Well, I am glad to hear that because I thought that is what I was getting.

Mr. Nicholi. Were either of you implying that? No, I do not think so at all.

Senator Denton. For the record, I am glad to have that said.

Mr. Nicholi. I think there is some evidence that shows that people that have difficulty controling their impulses, sexual impulses before marriage, have difficulty, equal difficulty after marriage.

Senator Denton. Do you agree with that, Dr. Wallerstein?

Ms. Wallerstein. Yes.

Senator Denton. Dr. Zill?

Mr. Zill. Yes.

Senator Denton. Well, thank you very much, and we will be submitting written questions to you and we hope that you will answer them. Your testimony was most valuable, and we greatly appreciate the time that you took to give it.

On our final panel we have two distinguished individuals: Dr. Dorothy Rich, president, Home and School Institute; and Dr. George A. Rekers, Department of Family and Child Development, Kansas State University.

Welcome to our panel, Dr. Rich, Dr. Rekers. Dr. Rich, will you go ahead.

STATEMENTS OF DOROTHY RICH, PRESIDENT, HOME AND SCHOOL INSTITUTE, GEORGE A. REKERS, PROFESSOR AND FORMER DEPARTMENT HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, MANHATTAN, KANS.

Mrs. Rich. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am the founder of the Home and School Institute (HSI) which is dedicated to involving all families in a nurturing, educational role with their children.

I am pleased to be here today to talk about the work of the institute. This work involves large numbers of single parent and working parent families across the country. In my testimony for the record, I discussed the institute's nondeficit approach: that is building on the strengths of all families. And, appropriately, this week we are initiating a conference here in Washington on single parent families and the schools. I can talk about this conference and its goals if you would like to address questions on it later.

In the testimony for the record I referred to the institute's home education program.

At this point I would like to describe briefly how it works. Our HSI home education program may be one of the "helps" that have been called for during the session this morning: How can we work directly with families?

The Home and School Institute system is designed to stimulate learning at home by children. It is especially suited for single parents and working parent families, but actually it be used successfully in any home.

It provides parents with simple techniques to foster learning. In fact, parents who know the value of informal education may be using these on their own. But what we do is motivate all parents to do them and to become directly involved in teaching their children.

These are activities, by the way, that do not duplicate the work of the school. The techniques involved for the young child—such activities as using the clock to teach arithmetic, using the TV schedule to keep to time limits, dialing and reading telephone numbers; for the older youngsters, activities include filling in blank comic strips with home-made dialog, making good purchases at the store, or using maps for family trips.

The activities are done alongside household routines. The hurried parent in a few minutes a day can teach science or reading, or math, or writing in a relaxed, at home way. The activities are easy. They do not take much time. They do not cost money. And we do have documentation, indicated in my written testimony, that these activities build the achievement and motivation of children.

The key to this system and the way it differs from other programs is not these simple activities, as such. We have found ways to get parents, usually mothers, to use them at home on a regular basis. We build on parents' love for their children and their ambition to see them achieve. And it has been very gratifying in my 20 years in working with parents, many of whom are on welfare, many of whom are single parents with little education themselves, to see how deeply they desire their children to succeed.

We train teachers to tell parents how important they are in teaching their child, and we give teachers the home learning materials to use with parents. In some programs, such as the large one that we created in Los Angeles, we involve parents to teach other parents.

By and large, teachers generally have not received training in reaching out to parents, nor do they know the research which underscores the importance of doing this. Often, even if they want to work with parents, they do not get the support and the time from their school systems to do it.

The Institute seeks to intervene with school administrations to win their support in this critically needed effort. Some school systems do recognize the importance of this work, but they are still indeed few and far between. Here in the District of Columbia at Tubman School, the Institue has a federally supported demonstration program entitled, "Home, the Learning Place."

It is a replica of a home in a school. I invite you to come to see it. In this center we show parents and teachers how everything around them can be used for teaching. I would like to share briefly some examples of specific activities we call recipes for learning. These are given to parents in booklet form.

The material is written and presented in such a way that parents know exactly what to do. They are encouraged to use their own imagination and creativity. They are told they can do nothing wrong. This point of view, by the way, is implicit in our nondeficit approach in working with families.

After a while, they start to make up their own activities, and so do the children. An activity for purposes of example: Measure for pleasure. In this, we measure everything in the house. Catalog shopping spree is another. In this, we hypothesize on what to buy and make some wise buying judgments.

Another activity current events wall where children and parents post articles and materials in which they are interested. Then there's morning messages: everyone in the family writes to each other. It cuts down nagging, and it gets things done.

These are but a few activities from our storehouse. They have all been tested. They all work. They individualize education in a meaningful and very personal way at home. Our programs extend from kindergarten through junior high. The system has the advantage of providing for children systematic encouragement from parents to learn and to achieve. This is the real motivator.

Children, then, use the activities and do in fact learn. What we bave been doing is reaching out to parents and getting them to work with their child at home, building on their ambitions and their love for their children.

We start with the idea that even the least educated, poorest mothers have ambition and love for their children. And they have these feelings in abundance. This is why we call our program the nondeficit concept. We do not start out blaming a parent for lacking money or education or for being a single parent. We start with the assurance that a mother's love is something strong that can be built upon.

I have included in my written statement some recommendations about specific ways to build upon this love. I could elaborate on them, but I will not go into great detail at this late hour. I do want to make a few recommendations that I believe government could indeed be thinking about. I suggest that what is needed today is a way to provide information and materials to help all families: One, to become more aware of their important role as educators of their children, and two, to offer a variety of home learning activities for families—all families—to use with their children at home.

In the area of policy recommendations, I urge that all government interventions and support for the family, recognize that the family is indeed the chief societal institution capable of servicing the personal needs of adults and children; that all families, regardless of their structure or socioeconomic status, already possess basic resources that could be mobilized and strengthened.

Families can be and should be helped to help themselves, not to become passive recipients of outside aid. The family is the critical influence in the development of its members' attitudes, habits, and beliefs. We can provide nationally self-help education, health, nutrition, and other programs that can be brought directly into the homes of families. This is possible now that we have the strength of a mass communications approach that can reach all families in a very direct way.

In the area of program recommendations, I urge: that existing and/or new legislation, including the new math and science bill now in the Senate, include provisions to involve families in the enhancement of the learning that is being encouraged; that the helping professions, teachers, social workers, all those who work with families, receive training and materials in how to work more closely and effectively with the family unit; that information programs be developed to increase the public awareness of the importance of the family and its role in education.

In terms of specific strategies, I suggest that we start by using the mass media, particularly television, to build the awareness of the family as a critical social institution. Home learning activities, could be used nationally to build functional literacy, nutrition, health education.

I would like to see volunteer organizations in which parents help other parents organize in a national effort. And I would like to add that I have a some of thoughts for putting these into action and one of them is storefront centers in cities across the country. In these materials can be distributed directly to families, working parents, single-parent families—who do indeed care about their children.

I have many more recommendations that I could share at a later time but I will conclude now with this thought: Instead of starting with what do we have to fix, let us start with what can we build on. The orientation changes from focusing on family's deficits to building on family's strengths.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement along with questions and response of Mrs. Rich follow:]

TESTIMONY

Building on Family Strengths
The Non-Deficit Model for Family Support

Prepared by
Dorothy Rich, President
The Home and School Institute

for

The Committee on Labor and Human Resources
Subcommittee on Aging, Family, and Human Services
United States Senate

Washington, D.C.
March 22, 1983

The views I will share today are my own and that of the Home and School Institute; but more importantly, they represent common sense, research, and experience of almost 20 years of direct service to thousands of families and schools across this nation.

Since 1964, I have been designing programs and materials for families and for schools. The goals of this work are to:

- Strengthen the family as the primary nurturing institution for both children and adults.
- Build the academic and social development of school age children including handicapped children. We do this through realistic parent involvement in their children's education--without duplicating the work of the schools.
- Provide "helping professions" with training and materials in order to help them work more effectively as partners with families.

The programs of the Home and School Institute are realistic and systematic, using people and resources already in place at home and in the community. We focus on practical assistance that all families and schools need to:

(1) enable children to acquire self-discipline, purpose,

and the skills and attention necessary for success in life;

(2) provide daily life skills and feelings of satisfaction to adults in their parenting role.

There is already a great deal known about families. The research on the importance of the family as educator is very clear. (The Institute has assembled a bank of these materials and would be pleased to share it.)

We know so well the statistics about single parents and working mothers that these need not be repeated here. What may not be widely understood is that while these statistics show change, they do not necessarily show weakness. The Institute, in its programs around the country, has found strengths in all families. We have found that virtually all homes, no matter whether rich or poor, are citadels of care and concern for children. Homes are whole when there is an adult who cares for a child. We build on this caring, and we have not been disappointed or disillusioned.

The work of the Institute has been devoted in large part to developing a parent-as-teacher strategy which can be used by all parents in their own homes with their own children. We build programs based on assuming family strength--not deficits. Our demonstration programs (see list appended to this paper) employ a preventive, self-help approach. We provide a structured home education program which uses the unique resources of the home without duplicating the work of the school. Research has documented positive effects for children. It has also shown that these programs work for a wide range of families, including those who have little time, little money, and little formal education.

I believe--as a parent and teacher myself--that all parents want to help their children and what they need are the initial tools to do the job. HSI provides, as the saying goes, tips on how to fish, and families then can catch fish for the rest of their lives.

Families must see themselves as teachers. This takes nothing away from the schools. All families are the most important teachers of their children. Our approach builds a complementary, non-adversarial partnership combining the strengths of the home and the strengths of the schools. As a school person for 25 years, I have great respect for the work of the school. But while the school as an institution is powerful and needs and deserves our support, it just can't be as potent as the family.

A question that needs to be addressed is not how to use the school to strengthen the family, but how to use the potency and impact of the family to strengthen the school. Research has clearly shown that the efforts of schools which do not involve families do not result in achievement for children. What is needed is a real and substantive partnership between home and school. And this needs to happen now. It's traditionally safe to say that we need to know more before taking action, etc., but in my judgment we already know a great deal.

We know that families are important. We know that families care. We know that teachers want to be effective. We know that a growing number of families and schools are feeling vulnerable in the face of so many changes today. And we know that support is needed to help families and schools identify their strengths and to build upon them.

These are the reasons why the Home and School Institute has initiated a national conference this week in Washington entitled Single Parent Families and the Schools. The purpose of this conference is to bring together, for the first time, educators and mental health professionals in a combined effort to address the following questions:

- What are schools doing now and what can be done to support more fully the development and achievement of children from single parent and working parent families?
- How can these families help the schools?
- Are there ways that schools, community agencies and families can collaborate more effectively?
- How can related interest groups join forces to strengthen the relationship between families and schools?

The conference is designed to provide and share information, offer needed, practical assistance now to schools, community organizations and families. Workshops cover: Innovative programs; Studies and research; Everyday concerns of families and schools; Social policy and future directions.

The interest in this topic is so strong that all presenters and conferees are coming from across the country, without subsidy or honorarium, to attend. Well-known speakers, representing liberal and conservative points of view (including Dr. Benjamin Spock, who is now revising his famous book on Baby and Child Care) will participate. Thanks to the interest and the generosity of the National Education Association, the meetings will be held at its headquarters here in Washington.

As part of the conference outreach, a Home and School Institute analysis of research findings on the impact of single parent and working mother families on their children's academic achievement will be presented. The conference format is participatory and is intended to elicit program and policy recommendations. These can be shared with the committee after the conference.

The Home and School Institute has a long record of service and experience with families and schools across the nation. From this experience come these basic policy and program recommendations that I offer for your consideration:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Basic to all government interventions and supports for the family should be policies which recognize that:

1. The family is the chief societal institution capable of servicing the personal needs of adults and children;
2. All families, regardless of structure or socio-economic status possess basic resources that can be mobilized and strengthened, i.e. families should be and can be helped to help themselves, not to become passive recipients of outside aid;
3. The family is the critical influence in the development of its members' attitudes, habits, and beliefs. Education, health, nutrition, and other programs of an educational nature can have a greater and more lasting impact when the family functions as a delivery system of services to its members.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Existing and/or new legislation should include provisions to develop programs which can work effectively with families in the enhancement of parenting and other skills needed for successful family functioning.
2. The helping professions should receive training and materials in how to work more closely and effectively with the family unit.
3. Information programs should be developed to increase public awareness of the importance of the family, the many roles and services it provides, basic strengths and stresses encountered by families today.

STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The mass media, particularly television, should be utilized to create an awareness of the family as a critical social institution.
2. Home learning activities, in which families learn together, should be developed in such areas as basic functional literacy, nutrition, and health education.
3. A portion of direct aid programs to families could be set aside for the development of materials and training which would promote self-help and self-sufficiency for the family.
4. Volunteer organizations, in which parents could help other parents, should be organized.
5. "Seed Money" grants should be established to encourage local schools, health care and social agencies, institutions of higher education, professional associations, etc. to provide staff development and training in how to reach out to and work more effectively with families.

Concluding Note

Instead of starting with "What do we have to fix?", let's start with "What can we build on?" The orientation changes from focusing on the family's deficits to building on the family's strengths.

The emphasis must be on prevention before issues become problems. The emphasis must be on abilities, before they become disabilities. The emphasis must be on what can be done with what is available now!

I thank you for inviting me to testify today and will conclude with these words that my daughter and I wrote to express the Institute's thinking:

> Fulfilling a child's potential is a family's achievement, a community's strength, a nation's security.

Attachment:
  Brief Description of HSI Programs

HOME AND SCHOOL INSTITUTE PROGRAMS

Brief Descriptions

The Institute's aim--to build student achievement and family life--has led to the development of these demonstration projects.

1. The HSI Home Learning Study and Its Relationship to First Grade Achievement, Washington, D.C., 1974-75

First grade classes from both inner city and suburban schools, using HSI methods, achieved significantly higher scores in reading than similar control group classes.

2. Project HELP (Home Education Learning Program), Benton Harbor, Michigan, 1976-ongoing

HSI teacher training methods and materials are used in a Title I ESEA program for first graders and kindergarteners. Students using HSI materials at home with their families achieved a 42% gain in reading. Replications of this program have taken place in Grand Rapids and East Lansing, Michigan and in South Bend, Indiana.

3. AHEAD (Accelerating Home Education and Development) Southern Christian Leadership Conference West, Los Angeles, California, 1978-ongoing

The HSI curriculum method is used to train neighborhood workers to help other families. Results from this pilot bilingual Spanish/English program indicate that participating students test higher in reading.

4. Families Learning Together, 1979-ongoing

This HSI learning program builds children's skills and adult knowledge simultaneously. Field tested in urban Michigan and rural South Carolina, 92% of the parents reported that the program made their children confident and enjoy school more. Replications of this program have taken place in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, and Rockford, Illinois.

5. Parent-School Partnership, Washington, D.C. 1980-ongoing

This program involves families of learning disabled children. The HSI learning system consists of Home Education Plans (HEP's) for each child to supplement the Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) of the school. Significant educational gains have been documented. The Family Place Center, a replica of a home and community in a school classroom, illustrates how everything can be used for learning.

6. Job Success Begins at Home, Washington, D.C., 1981-ongoing

This program prepares junior high students for the world of work. It includes audio-visual and home learning materials. Adolescents, together with their families, build personal improvement skills and attitudes designed to help them get and keep a job.

7. Home-School Volunteer Corps, Washington, D.C., 1982-ongoing

This program prepares teachers and senior citizens to work with families of junior high school students. Training strategies and home curricula are field tested to develop a partnership approach for involving senior citizens.

8. Success for Families--Child Abuse Prevention, 1982-ongoing

This project establishes a prevention program for "at risk" families to increase healthy family functioning and to decrease factors linked to child maltreatment. This adaptation of the Families Learning Together system involves family aides, the HSI home curriculum, individual family sessions and groups, and a Family Center.

Professional Training

HSI college training programs, begun in 1971, provide academic credit for professionals working with families. These include the master's degree concentration in School and Family-Community Involvement and in-service workshops nationwide. Over 3000 professionals have successfully completed these programs since their inception. The U.S. Department of Education has identified this training as a unique model in community involvement.

Parent Education

HSI parent education programs, ongoing since 1964 include The Creative Parent and Success for Children workshops. These focus on specific family skill building.

The sessions focus on daily life problem solving, positive parenting attitudes, and ways to build children's academic and social abilities.

The goal in this training is to show families how to make effective use of the "natural environment" of their home and community setting. Examples include learning through ordinary activities such as putting away the laundry, setting the table, putting gas in the car, shopping at the supermarket.

All of these programs are now ready for use nationally.

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Special Projects Office
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April 8, 1983

Senator Jeremiah Denton
United States Senate
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Denton:

It was a pleasure and an honor to testify before your committee on March 22.

I am happy to respond to the additional questions submitted by Senator Dodd.

Q: Why do you feel that your institute's'nondeficit' approach works so well?

A: The nondeficit approach uses qualities and innate capacities that virtually all parents have--rather than asking parents to use qualities that they don't have. A parents' capacity for caring, concern and love for their children is already in place: the nondeficit approach builds on these and on the capacities parents have for self-help. The institute's nondeficit approach works also because it provides parents with self-help techniques that do not demand that parents have money, be well educated or even highly literate. The institute activities are simple , on purpose: they can be done easily and take little time. They build on the motivation and the love that parents have for their children.

Q: How could your home education programs work more widely for more people?

A: One answer is to use institutions that already have direct access to large numbers of parents. These include schools, hospitals, churches and welfare offices. In Washington, D.C., the institute has set up a home within a school to show how everything around us can be used for learning. This Family Learning Center model could be put in schools, even storefronts, across the country. Teenagers could learn about home education in high school home economics classes; for busy working parent families, special tips on the how-to's of home education could be the content of PTA and back-to school nights nationally.

It's even possible to envision that supermarkets and gas stations could hand out home learning activities as "premiums" for their customers. Employers can build employee productivity by providing home learning materials for parents that will help them organize their home lives so their minds can be fully on task at the job.

This could be and should be a national educational effort.

Q: How might we use newsppapers, radio and television to encourage home education programs? How might we get more school systems involved?

Home learning "spots" could be provided as regular, brief features on radio, television, and in the newspapers. Self-help is now popular: parents are no longer willing to wait for the experts. They're ready to move ahead to help themselves and their children. On radio, a tip on teaching reading or math in the kitchen could be shared in 30 seconds. On television, one minute "ads" can show an easy science experiment in the back yard or a math question at the gas station. In 1964, I originated a self-help teaching newspaper column for parents. In today's climate, it would be possible to find readers for these tips in newspapers across the country. It's not just public service: it's good business for the media. This is what the country wants, and no doubt sponsors could be found to help support these "spots."

The growing technology in individual homes also means that software could be developed for computers, VTRS, and even tapes for home and car cassette players. This software would carry the message and show the practice of home education.

More school systems will become involved with home education when:

a/ More school personnel become aware of the research that indicates the critical importance of the home as an " educational institution."

b/ More school teachers and admininstrators receive training in working with parents as home teachers.

c/ A portion of legislatively mandated funds require that teachers receive this training and provide teachers with funds to participate in these programs to build home-school educational partnership.
A case in point is the current math-science bill in the Senate. To gain full benefit from this legislation, parents need to be involved as motivators and reinforcers of their children's learning.

Thank you for inviting me to testify and to respond to these questions. Please call upon me for any additional information you may need.

Sincerely,
Dorothy Rich
Dorothy Rich, Ed.D.
HSI President

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Dr. Rich. And let me say that we did absorb your comment about the math and science emphasis. That bill is currently undergoing hearings, and it occurred to me during those hearings that rather than throw money purely at math and science, we should think about the deficiencies in the English language which preclude successful study by reading books, and so forth.

It reminds me of moving from school to school when I was a kid—we were in the hotel business—and each time I would change schools, I would find myself behind and ahead in various subjects. It was not the teacher; it was my mother who brought me up to speed in spelling or my father in arithmetic, as long as he was around.

So, that is a very, very good suggestion. I shall see if we cannot get that incorporated somehow in the bill because we have the propensity for thinking about throwing money at problems from the Government rather than functional ideas such as yours, of working with what we have. There is potential. It does not really require money.

Ms. RICH. I think we have to think in terms of the total educational process and not just the schooling itself. Schooling is part of the educational process. I do have research which I could share with you on the impact of the family on the educational achievement of children.

Senator DENTON. I would be happy to receive that. I have used in my own talks to teachers the fact that the word "educare" in the original Latin, to educate, really meant, "to rear," and that parents and teachers share that together, that opportunity and obligation.

Go head, Dr. Rekers.

Mr. REKERS. Thank you for this opportunity. I wanted Senator Grassley from Iowa to know that I am also an Iowan, born in Waterloo, Iowa. Please pass that on to him; I am the third Iowan here to testify today.

Divorce has become one of the most common tragic crises in present day American society. The rapid growth of the number of broken homes has forced unprecedented numbers of children to suffer as innocent victims.

In 1960, 1 in 11 children in the United States, as has been mentioned, lived in single parent homes. But by 1980, it was 1 in 5 children living in a single-parent home. In 1980 there were over 11 million children living in families without a father figure at home. With this huge number of homes without a father for American children, as documented by the previous witnesses, we should surely ask: "What is the effect of father absence on children's development?"

As Dr. Nicholi of Harvard University also summarized, research has documented that children without fathers are more likely to have lowered academic performance, are more likely to be school dropouts, have truancy problems, have more cognitive and intellectual deficits, have increased adjustment problems of various sorts, and have higher risks for psychosexual development problems.

With major research grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, for many years I have studied psychosexual and gender disturbances in the development of children since 1972. And I have concluded that the father's absence is related to risks for the boy's adjustment to a normal male identification.

Research has established that one of the more important functions of the father in the home is to insure development of appropriate sexual identity in children. Absence of the father for boys has been linked to greater occurrences of effeminancy, particularly when the father leaves in preschool years for the boy, higher dependence, less successful adult heterosexual adjustment, greater aggressiveness, and exaggerated masculine behavior for boys when the father leaves during the preadolescent years.

Compared to girls from intact families, girls who have lost their fathers by divorce have been found to be overly responsive to males, more likely to be sexually involved with males as adolescents; they marry younger; they were pregnant more often before marriage, and they became divorced or separated from their own eventual husbands more frequently.

In my research studies of boys with sexual identity disturbances at the UCLA Psychology Clinic and at the University of Florida Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Division, I found that 67 percent of the biological fathers were absent from the home for these boys with these problems. And the reason for the father's absence was separation and/or divorce in 82 percent of the cases. At the time of my study in the early 1970's, approximately 12 percent of all white children in the United States were living with their mothers only without benefit of a father figure, compared to the 67 percent of the boys with sexual identity disturbance.

Taken all together, the evidence has correlated the absence of the father with higher risk for male sexual identity disturbance, as well as other disorders, such as depression in adolescence, and other psychiatric symptoms.

In contrast, child development research indicates that secure sexual identity is fostered in both boys and girls when fathers are in the home and are affectionate, nuturant, available and actively involved in child rearing.

Dr. Wallerstein presented her important research on divorce which has revealed that the initial impact of separation or divorce does cause pain, suffering, fears, and disruption for almost all children and adolescents involved. As a practicing clinical child psychologist and family therapist, I regularly witness what the research has documented for these children of broken homes: These youngsters typically suffer depression over their loss, worry and anxiety over the marital disintegration, anger toward a parent for the resulting chaos and disruption, guilt over their real or imagined misbehavior thought to have contributed to the family breakup, loneliness and apprehensiveness over being seen as different from their playmates, a painful longing for their departed father, and a keen feeling of vulnerability to uncontrollable tragedy.

The child's acute psychological distress, their susceptibility to emotional disturbances, and the sense of family instability have been documented to persist at least for 2 years and have potential lifetime consequences.

To simply survey children, teenagers, or adults about their own self-report of their perceived adjustment, as Dr. Zill reported, is not the best available measure of adjustment. I think that scientifically speaking, Dr. Zill appeared to be extrapolating beyond what his data could really determine when he implied that the psychological impact of divorce usually does not have long term effects, based only on his simple survey questions.

Senator DENTON. Did you agree with the thrust of my question when he talked about the almost lack of difference between children in tact homes and those who were in divorced families, that there was only about 10 percent difference in what they said about how closely they related to their father or their mother.

But I believe that has to be, as I asked him, empathetically considered. If you ask the child when the parents are already broken, are you close to your mother and father, they are going to answer from a different base than asking one who is still with his parents.

Is that not correct?

Mr. REKERS. I agree with that. That is a methodological problem of that survey questionnaire research method. And a better measure, scientifically speaking, would be a research method that would actually conduct a study to do a professional, clinical assessment evaluation of those families and individuals, and to investigate by actually observing the home situation and observing the actual relationships between parent and child many years after the divorce.

Prior to the second half of the 20th century in America, divorce was not prevalent, and a popular attitude of even unhappily married couples was that they should stay together for the good of the children. In contrast, the latter half of the 20th century has witnessed a major shift in values to a popular lay and professional attitude expressing a strong sentiment that unhappy marriage for the couple is equally unhappy for the children, implying the needed so-called solution of divorce to restore happiness for the parents, which presumably will foster happiness for the children as well.

Although the myth of romantic love in marriage may be dying, the myth of romantic divorce flourishes for many Americans. While most might agree that perpetuating a conflict-filled marriage for the sake of the children only lacks complete logic, I am increasingly disappointed by so many in the media, as well as professionals and married couples alike who overlook the obvious third alternative to divorce or staying unhappily married. That is, it would be better to solve the marital problems and restore harmony in the existing marriage.

It is irresponsible to automatically assume the fatalistic view that nothing could be done to solve the problems causing conflict in the marriage. With the widespread acceptance of divorce as an instant so-called solution in our instant society where we are used to instant meals and the like, millions of divorce cases entering the courts in the last decade have never attempted concerted problem solving efforts with an outside resource, such as a marriage counselor, psychologist, clergy, social worker, or family life educator.

Furthermore, the followup studies on divorced children of Drs. Wallerstein and Kelly reveal that the majority of children surveyed 5 years after their parents divorce did not consider their after divorce families to be an improvement over their before divorce home. The children reported more happiness before divorce than did their parents. From the child's perspective, divorce should be viewed as an extreme measure of last resort, something akin to the amputation of a limb if one's body is affected by gangrene and no medical treatment has succeeded, but only after trying medical treatment.

While neither an unhappy marriage nor a divorce is the most desirable environment for children's development, too many professionals and lay people alike hastily assume the inevitability of continued unhappiness in the conflicted marriage to ethically justify the supposed solution of family divorce.

Actually, divorce is nothing more than trading one set of problems for a different set of tragic and often enduring problems, often including the problems associated with father absence. It seems that millions of parents have purchased their relief from marital conflict with a divorce that forces their children to pay the price in unhappiness, stress, and adjustment problems that could persist for a lifetime.

Victimless divorce is either rare or nonexistent when children are present. How much better it would be if the professions and public alike refocused upon a search for a genuine solution to marital dissatisfaction in order to preserve the family unit in an unbroken state.

Fresh, new national leadership is needed at exactly this point. For too long American society has attended to the individual needs of children of broken homes and the plight of the single parent to the neglect of the family system before its breakdown. The result has often been only a partial symptomatic relief or a bandaid approach which has neglected the root problems in the original family unit itself.

Isolated, categorical government programs, such as those for pregnant teenagers, runaway youth, child nutritional problems, school dropouts, juvenile delinquency, child abuse, or many child adjustment problems simply have not often typically met the total family needs which generated the original problem in the first place.

George Gallup eloquently summarized the evidence that Americans hope and aspire for an intact, traditional nuclear family. Americans need help on how to implement their goals. Many serious marital and child development problems could be prevented or corrected in earlier stages if families were better equipped to recognize family strengths and to build upon those strengths.

In that regard, I agree with Dr. Dorothy Rich's approach of training parents in skills on how to put their strong family values into practice.

Many needy marriages would benefit from learning about successful and coping practices used by families with high levels of well-being. Strategic funding could be appropriated to the Office for Families in the Department of Health and Human Services with the mandate to develop family-life education materials to be distributed to families based upon the values of the desirability of marital permanence, with sexual relationships reserved exclusively within marriage, and the importance of the continuity of parental care for children.

These materials could be disseminated by private, local, community service organizations, including Scouts, volunteer city service clubs, PTA's, churches, synagogues, and other social agencies. Marriage enrichment and parent education curriculums that promote the values and skills possessed by strong American families should be identified, developed, evaluated, and disseminated by the U.S. Office for Families to existing social support networks in local communities.

Research indicates that family connections with local support networks decreases demand for a use of a variety of governmental social services. Research has also established a high correlation between religious commitment and family commitment. This finding underscores the strategic importance of encouraging the work of religious institutions with family education and their ongoing involvement with natural helping networks for families.

Volunteer resources can be activated by providing effective, preventative, educational materials for local programing to enhance marital satisfaction and parental competence, nuturance, and human problem solving skills. By promoting dissemination and widespread utilization of demonstration research project findings on building family strengths, the Federal role could effectively facilitate private and local agency efforts to prevent family breakups and thereby promote more stable and adaptive child development.

The current divorce rate is unacceptable for American children. It is shortsighted to focus all Government-sponsored services on helping children and adults after the tragedy of divorce. The Government sector and the private sector should join in a new partnership to prevent family breakup.

The solution is not for Government to get into the home, but for the Government to encourage parents to rediscover their critical role in the home. Let us sow some seeds of forward-looking governmental initiative to strengthen family life in American society, which will reap a fruitful harvest of greater stability, self-fulfillment, and a role model for the future of the children of our Nation.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rekers follows:]

FATHER ABSENCE IN BROKEN FAMILIES: THE EFFECTS ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

Testimony by:

George A. Rekers, Ph.D.

Professor and Former Department Head

Department of Family and Child Development

Manhattan, Kansas 66506

For:

United States Senate Subcommittee on Family and Human Services

Senator Jeremiah Denton, Chairman

Room SD 430

Dirksen State Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510

9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 22, 1983

FATHER ABSENCE IN BROKEN FAMILIES: THE EFFECTS ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

Summary Statement by Dr. George A. Rekers

In 1960, one in eleven children in the United States lived in a single-parent home, but by 1980, one in five children were living in a single-parent home. Dr. Paul Glick of the United States Bureau of the Census estimates that by 1990, one in four children will be living in a single-parent home, and with the current divorce and remarriage rates, he projects that one in two--fully 50% of all children under age 18 in 1990--will have lived for some portion of their lives in a one-parent family. Ninety percent of these children live with their mother, with their father absent from the home. In 1980, there were over 11 million children living in families without a father-figure in the home.

With this huge exodus of so many fathers from the homes of American children over the past two decades, we should surely ask: "What is the effect of the father's absence on the children's development?" Research has documented that children without fathers more often have lowered academic performance, more cognitive and intellectual deficits, increased adjustment problems, and higher risks for psychosexual development problems. With major research grants from the National Institute of Mental Health for many years, I have studied psychosexual and gender disturbances in children since 1972, and I have concluded that the father's absence is related to important risks for the boy's adjustment to a normal male identification.

Research has been established that one of the more important functions that the father normally fulfills in the family is to ensure the development of appropriate sexual identity in his children. The absence of the father for boys has been linked to greater occurrences of effeminancy, higher dependence, less successful adult heterosexual adjustment, greater aggressiveness, or exaggerated masculine behaviors. Boys separated from their fathers in the preschool years are more likely to be effeminate. Boys separated from their fathers in their preadolescent period between ages 6 and 12 years were significantly more likely to display an exaggerated masculine aggressiveness. Both of these detrimental effects reflect an inadequate development of masculine role and male identification.

In girls, research studies have compared girls with two parents to girls who grew up without a father because of divorce or death of the father. Compared to the girls from intact families, girls who lost their fathers by death were more inhibited in their relationships with males in general, but girls who lost their fathers by divorce were overly responsive to males, were more likely to be sexually involved with males in adolescence, married younger, were pregnant more often before marriage, and became divorced or separated from their eventual husbands more frequently.

While there may be various contrasting family etiologies for a variety of forms of sexual deviance, taking the research as a whole, fathers of homosexual and transsexual men are reported to be more often absent, uninvolved, indifferent, rejecting, or unaffectionate as compared to fathers of heterosexual men. In my studies of boys with sexual identity disturbances that parallel the retrospective reports of adult homosexuals, transsexuals and transvestites, I discovered the same pattern. With boys between three and thirteen years of age studied at the U.C.L.A. Psychology Clinic and the University of Florida Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Division, I found that sixty-seven percent of the biological fathers of these boys were physically absent from the home. Virtually all the fathers were absent in the homes of the boys with the most profound sexual identity disturbances, while 54% of the fathers were absent for the more moderately disturbed boys. The mean age of the sexual identity disturbed boys was 3½ years at the time of separation from their fathers, with 80% of the boys being age 5 or under when separation had occurred. The reason for the father's absence was separation and/or divorce in 82% of these cases. At the time of my study in the early 1970's, approximately 12% of all white children [illegible] United States were living with their mothers only without benefit of a father figure, compared to 67% of the boys with sexual identity disturbance. Taken together, all the available evidence has correlated the absence of the father with male sexual identity disturbance and masculine role adjustment problems.

In contrast, child development research indicates that a secure male identity and normal masculine adjustment is fostered in boys by fathers in the home who are affectionate, nurturant, available, and actively involved in child rearing. Girls secure in their femininity tend to have fathers who encourage their feminine adjustment, and contribute leadership in childrearing. Therefore, the decline of the nuclear family in recent decades could have a debilitating effect on the establishment of normal psychosexual identity in increasing numbers of children.

Research on divorce reveals that the initial impact of the separation or divorce causes pain, suffering, fears and disruption for almost all children and teenagers involved. As a practicing clinical child psychologist and family therapist, I regularly witness what the research documents for these children of broken homes: These youngsters typically suffer depression over their loss, worry and anxiety over the marital disintegration, anger toward a parent for the resultant chaos and disruption, guilt over their real or imagined misbehavior thought to have contributed to the family break-up, loneliness and apprensiveness over being seen as different from playmates, and a keen feeling of vulnerability to uncontrollable tragedy. The child's acute psychological distress and sense of family instability persist two or more years, with potential life-time consequences. Each year over the past decade, more than one million children under 18 years of age have experienced their parent's divorce, with estimates that between 32 to 46 percent of children who have grown up in the United States during the 1970's will have experienced separation or divorce of their parents. These widespread effects are not only psychological but economic, with over half of all single-parent families living below the poverty level.

Prior to the second half of the twentieth century in America, divorce was not prevalent and a popular attitude of even unhappily married couples was that they should stay married "for the good of the children." In contrast, the latter half of the twentieth century has witnessed a shift in values to a popular lay and professional attitude expressing a strong sentiment that an unhappy marriage for the couple is equally unhappy for the children, implying the needed so-called "solution" of divorce to restore happiness for the parents which presumably will foster happiness for the children as well. While most might agree that perpetuating a conflict-filled marriage "for the sake of the children" only lacks logic, I am increasingly disappointed by so many media reporters, professionals and married couples alike overlook the obvious third alternative to divorce or staying unhappily married--that is, it would be better to solve the marital problems and restore harmony in the existing marriage. With the widespread acceptance of divorce as a so-called "solution" to marital conflict, millions of divorce cases entering the courts in the last decade have never attempted concerted problem-solving efforts with an outside resource such as a marriage counselor, psychologist, clergy, social worker, or family life educator. Furthermore, the follow-up studies of Drs. Wallerstein and Kelly revealed that the majority (56%) of children surveyed five years after their parent's divorce did not consider their after-divorce family to be an improvement over their before-divorce home. The children reported more happiness before divorce than did their parents. The children generally prefer living together with both mom and dad. While neither an unhappy marriage nor divorce is the most desirable environment for children's development, too many professionalsand lay people alike hastily assume the inevitability of continued unhappiness in the conflicted marriage to ethically justify the supposed "solution" of family divorce. Actually, divorce is nothing more than trading one set of problems for a different set of tragic and often enduring problems--often including the problems associated with father absence. How much better it would be if the professions and public alike refocused upon the search for a genuine solution to the marital dissatisfaction in order to preserve the family unit in an unbroken state.

Fresh, new national leadership is needed at exactly this point. For too long, American society has attended to the individual needs of the children of broken homes and the plight of the single-parent to the neglect of the family system before its breakdown. The result has often been only a partial symptomatic relief, or a "band-aid" approach which neglected the root problems in the original family unit itself. Isolated categorical government programs--such as those for pregnant teenagers, runaway youth, school drop-outs, juvenile delinquents, or childhood adjustment problems--simply have not typically met the total family need which generated the individual problem in the first place.

Many serious marital and child development problems could be prevented or corrected in early stages if families were better equipped to recognize family strengths and to build upon those strengths. Many needy marriages would benefit from learning about the successful and coping practices used by families with high levels of well-being. There is a glaring need for more prevention and family life education to off-set the need for expanded governmental financial support for remedial social services for child victims of broken families. The escalating rate of increase in broken families might tax our natural resources to the limit if we fail to find solutions to mending marriages and strengthening existing families because of our preoccupation with the remedial task of providing services to the victims of broken families.

The federal role needs to be reconceptualized to analyze family impact variables, to determine the impact of national policies, regulations, taxation and legislation upon families, and to publicize how successful marriage and family life works. Stratetic funding should be appropriated to the Office for Families in the Department of Health and Human Services with the mandate to develop family life education materials based upon the values of the desirability of marital permanence, with sexual relationships reserved exclusively within marriage and the importance of the continuity of parental care for children. These materials could be disseminated by private, local community service organizations (including scouts, volunteer city service clubs, PTAs, churches, synagogues and social agencies). Marriage enrichment and parent education curricula that promote the values and skills possessed by strong American families should be identified, developed, evaluated and disseminated by the U.S. Office for Families to existing social support networks in local communities. Research indicates that family connections with local support networks decreases demand for use of a variety of governmental social services. Research has established a high correlation between religious commitment and family commitment; this finding underscores the strategic importance of encouraging the work of religious institutions with family education and their involvement with natural helping networks for families. Volunteer resources can be activated by providing effective preventative educational materials for local programming to enhance marital satisfaction and parental competence, nurturance, and human problem-solving skills. By promoting dissemination and widespread utilization of demonstration project findings on building family strengths, the federal role could effectively facilitate private and local agency efforts to prevent family breakup, and thereby promote more stable and adaptive child development.

One of the more important roles that the father plays in the family is to ensure the establishment and development of appropriate sexual identity in his children. Recent evidence (Fagot, 1974; Rubin, Provenzano, & Luria, 1974) suggests that the father is the parent who is most actively involved in sex-typing his sons and daughters. It is not entirely clear why this is the case. Lynn (1974) has discussed one line of thought which suggests that the father usually fulfills an instrumental role in the family, in contrast to the expressive role of the mother. Since instrumentality is associated with preparing the children for their roles in society, the father may be more concerned with promoting masculinity in his sons and femininity in his daughters. In considering the active part that the father plays in sex-typing his children, an important question arises. What happens to the sex-role learning process when the father is absent from the home? Professionals who deal with families are often faced with questions regarding the consequences of paternal absence due to a variety of reasons, such as separation, divorce, military service, and death. There is a body of research that addresses specific questions of this sort that may arise.

What Are the Effects of Father Absence on Psychosexual Development in Boys?

Early research in the area of gender-identity development focused on the effects of father absence. These early studies dealt primarily with boys, since it was believed that the detrimental influence on a fatherless home should be particularly evident in young males. Early paternal deprivation has been linked to more feminine cognitive styles (Carlsmith, 1964), lower masculinity, higher dependence, and either less aggression or exaggerated masculine behaviors.

Paternal absence has been reported to have negative effects on the psychosexual development of boys in numerous studies. For example, Stolz (1954) found that boys who were separated from their fathers during preschool years were more labeled by their fathers as "sissies" than those who had not been separated from their fathers. Nash (1965) reported on a group of 41 male orphans who had been brought up exclusively by women from 6 mo. to 5 yr. of age. These boys tended to score in the feminine direction on a battery of psychological tests more than a control group of boys from father-present homes. When half of this group was moved after the age of 5 to cottages where a married couple (and thus a father-figure) was present, their masculinity scores were higher than those of the other half of the group who remained in the totally feminine environment. However, both groups remained lower on their masculinity scores than the control group.

Fatherless boys have father fantasies that are more similar to those of girls than to those of boys with fathers present (Bach, 1946). Compared to boys from intact homes, boys with fathers absent are more likely to be perceived as effeminate by social workers familiar with the boys' case histories (Stephens, 1961). As adults, males from fatherless homes display less successful heterosexual adjustment than their counterparts whose fathers are present (Winch, 1949).

Another variable which must be considered in studying the effects of paternal deprivation is the reason for the father's absence from the home. Boys whose parents are divorced are more likely to be aggressive than are those whose fathers are dead (Santrock, 1977).

At What Age Are the Effects of Paternal Deprivation Most Readily Evident?

The age at which separation from the father occurs is an important variable. In general, the earlier that paternal deprivation occurs, the more profound the debilitating impact on the psychosexual development of his sons. Heatherington (1966) found that the sex-typed behaviors of young males whose fathers left home after the age of 5 resembled those of males whose fathers were present but this was not the case if the father left during the first four years of life.

The observable effects of paternal deprivation can take quite different forms, depending on the age at which separation occurs. Separation during preadolescence is more likely to produce exaggerated masculine behaviors than when the child is an infant or preschooler at the time of separation from the father (Santrock, 1977). If the father leaves the family when the son is between the ages of 6 and 12 yr., the son is significantly more likely to display an exxagerated masculine aggressiveness (McCord, McCord, & Thurber, 1962).

At first glance, the divergent results which indicate that paternal deprivation can result in either feminine or hypermasculine behavior appear puzzling. One way to resolve this apparent contradition of findings is to conceptualize the effect of fathers' absence as contributing to inadequate development of the masculine role, whether it be evidenced by deprivation in the feminine or the hypermasculine directions. Harrington (1970) has suggested that both exaggerated, compensatory masculine behavior (including aggression) and feminine behavior, on the other hand, are errors in sex-role behavior of males. Therefore, the apparent inconsistencies in the literature may reflect two possible deficits in sex-role behavior which can result from paternal absence--either femininity or compensatory masculinity.

Biller (1968), in an effort to resolve some of the inconsistencies in the literature, conducted a study in which he advocated the use of a multidimensional approach to defining masculinity, including measures of sex-role preference, sex-role orientation, and sex-role adoption. Sex-role preference, the conscious desire to adhere to the masculine or feminine role, was measured in terms of toy and game preferences. Sex-role adoption, which is related to the individual's overt behavior and society's perception of his behavior, was defined in terms of teacher ratings. Sex-role orientation, the conscious or unconscious sense of basic maleness or femaleness, was inferred to be measured by the Draw-a-Person and the IT Scale.

Support for the distinction between various aspects of masculinity was found in Biller's (1968) study. The measures used to define one aspect of masculinity were more highly correlated with each other than they were with the measures of other aspects of masculinity, and predictions could not safely be made from one aspect of masculinity to another. Therefore, the divergent results that can be obtained by measuring different facets of masculinity may be responsible for some of the apparently inconsistent findings in the literature.

Biller (1968) found that fathers' absence had a detrimental effect on the development of sex-role orientation, but did not affect sex-role adoption at all. Fathers' absence before the age of 4 yr. had a more enduring negative effect on sex-role orientation than on sex-role preference. A more recent study by Drake and McDugall (1977) confirmed the finding that fathers' absence has a significant effect on sex-role orientation, but not on sex-role adoption or sex-role preference.

What Are the Effects of Father Absence on Psychosexual Development in Girls?

There are relatively few studies that have dealt with the effects of paternal deprivation on daughters. Consequently, our knowledge of this area is limited and only tentative conclusions can be drawn. However, it does appear that the effects of paternal deprivation are less devastating with regards to psychosexual development in girls than boys. Several studies (e.g., Santrock, 1970; Winch, 1949) did not find significant differences between girls whose fathers were absent and those whose fathers were present in terms of sex-typed behaviors. When significant differences have been found, the pattern of effects observed has been as complex as was the case with boys. For example, the negative consequences of a fatherless home can be expressed in different forms, depending on the reason for the fathers' absence. Hetherington (1972) studied a group of adolescent females and found that, if the fathers' absence was due to death, the girls were inhibited in their interactions with males. In contrast, the girls were overly responsive to males and displayed early heterosexual behavior when fathers were absent after divorce.

Girls from homes broken by divorce are more often married younger, more often pregnant at the time of marriage, and more likely to become divorced or separated from their husbands as compared to girls from an intact, two-parent family (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1979).

Has Research Investigated Whether Father Absence Is Related to Sexual Identity Disorders?

The literature on the psychosexual development of normal children has revealed that the father is the parent whose role behaviors are most likely to generate sex-appropriate behaviors in children (Fagot, 1974; Rubin, Provenzano & Luria, 1974). Paternal characteristics that foster the establishment of normal gender identity in children include paternal nurturance and dominance (Hetherington & Deur, 1971; Lynn, 1974). In contrast, recent literature reviews of the effects of paternal deprivation (Biller, 1976; Mead & Rekers, 1979; Rosen & Teague, 1974) indicate that the sex-role learning process is adversely affected when fathers are either physically or psychologically absent from the home.

As anticipated, the impact of paternal deprivation on psychosexual adjustment is most conspicuous in homosexual and transsexual men. However, the role of the father in the etiology of gender-behavior disturbances and gender-identity disturbances has received considerably less attention than has the study of paternal variables in the establishment of gender identity in normal children. With the exception of a study by Rosen and Teague (1974), the majority of the research on fathers and various psychosexual behavior patterns has relied on the retrospective reports of adult homosexuals, transvestites, and transsexuals. Before turning to the major findings of this body of research, it is necessary to discuss the methodological problems of these studies that may limit the range of conclusions to be drawn from these data.

Because most of the studies on gender disturbances are retrospective in nature, a word should be said about the limited utility of retrospective case studies. The first possible artifact is the influence of memory on retrospective accounts. An adult who reports that his father was a weak, effeminate man tells you something about his present recollection of his father at the time of child-rearing. Childhood memories can easily become distorted, and scientifically it is untenable to assume automatically that the retrospective reports of adults are accurate representations of past events, although the retrospective account may represent subjective reality for the person. Secondly, retrospective studies of clinical cases are inherently biased in that they reveal nothing about the number of individuals who had similar family backgrounds and yet do not experience difficulties in psychosexual adjustment. Similarly, it cannot be determined if the reported parental characteristics contributed to or were the result of atypical sex-typed behaviors in children. Correlational data do not automatically constitute evidence regarding the direction of causality between variables.

Another methodological issue not completely resolved involves the representativeness of the sample of subjects used. With the exception of the study by E. Hooker (1969), many of the early studies dealt exclusively with homosexual persons experiencing psychological distress. Consequently, other psychological disorders may have often been confounded with homosexuality. More recent studies (Bell & Weinberg, 1978) have recruited subjects from homosexual organizations in an attempt to avoid this problem, although not being treated for psychological disorder is a fallible criterion of "normality." Another source of sampling bias has been introduced into these studies in that individuals who are involved in homosexual organizations, particularly in the San Francisco area, may be less socially isolated, more vocal and psychiatrically differentiating than the population of individuals at large with homosexual behavior.

Studies that deal with gender-disturbed children avoid some of the limitations inherent in retrospective studies. However, these studies have methodological problems peculiar to themselves. Some of the studies on fathers and gender-disturbed children have not provided an appropriate control group (including the present study), therefore limiting the conclusions that can be drawn from the findings. The majority of these studies have been conducted largely in the clinical setting, which may represent only a restricted sample of familial interactions in the general non-patient population.

Keeping in mind the methodological limitations of this body of literature, we will first examine the role of the father in the etiology of male homosexuality.

Are Children from Broken Homes More Likely to Develop Problems with Homosexual Tendencies?

The classic, familial constellation reported for the male homosexual includes a close-binding, intimate mother and a hostile, detached father. This pattern of family relations has been observed in both patient (Bieber, et al., 1962; West, 1959) and non-patient homosexual samples (Evans, 1969; Hooker, 1958, 1959, 1969). In the Bieber et al. (1969) study, the fathers of homosexual sons were often described as aloof, hostile and rejecting. More than four-fifths of these fathers were physically or psychologically absent from the home. In addition, they rarely took measures to protect their sons from the influence of a seductive, overly close mother. There are many problems associated with this study, including the fact that the subjects were high socioeconomic status patients from the New York City area undergoing psychoanalysis and thus a very select population. Because this was a patient population, other personality problems may also have influenced their relationships with their parents. In addition, the questionnaires dealing with familial relations were filled out by the subjects' psychoanalysts, based on their second-hand reconstructions of what their patients had told them about their childhood experiences. However, the close-binding mother/hostile, aloof father pattern has been upheld in a number of studies, making it the most common familial constellation observed in the backgrounds of homosexual males. Despite major methodological differences, this uniformity of findings is very convincing.

Nevertheless, recent research (Bell & Weinberg, 1978) has suggested that there may be multiple contrasting etiologies in homosexuality and indeed a variety of forms of homosexuality with differing types of family backgrounds.

The literature on heterosexual males reveals that paternal deprivation, in the form of either physical or psychological absence, has adverse effects on psychosexual development. This is particularly evident in the case of homosexual sons. Characteristics of the father that foster normal psychosexual adjustment--nurturance, affection, active involvement in the family and dominance--are notably lacking in the fathers of homosexuals.

In a study of Saghir and Robins (1973) the fathers of homosexual men were described by their sons as indifferent and uninvolved. They were often perceived as being rejecting, sometimes deriding their sons for their lack of interest in typically masculine activities. In the majority of the cases, the fathers of homosexuals left the decision-making in the home to the mothers. Not surprisingly, only 13% of the homosexuals, compared to 66% of the heterosexual control group, identified with their fathers.

Fathers of homosexual sons are less affectionate than those of heterosexual sons (Apperson & McAdoo, 1968; Beve, 1965). In one study of 40 homosexual males (Brown, 1963), there was not one case in which the subject reported having an affectionate relationship with his father. In fact, homosexual males often fear and even hate their fathers (Evans, 1974; Jones, 1944; Terman & Miles, 1968).

It is interesting to note that more masculine homosexual males tend to have better relationships with their fathers (Evans, 1969; Nash & Hayes, 1965). The home environment of homosexual males tends to be mother-dominant (Saghir & Robins, 1973; West, 1959), with neither the mother nor the father encouraging masculine attitudes or activities in their sons (Evans, 1969; Stephan, 1973).

Are Children From Broken Homes More Likely to Develop Transsexualism?

Very little has been published about the role of the father in the etiology of transsexualism. Newman (1970) has noted that the family dynamics of the male transsexual are characterized by an overly close relationship with the mother and by a passive, physically absent father. The available research would support this contention. For example, Hore, Nicolle, Chir and Calnan (1973) reported on two male siblings who underwent sex-reassignment surgery. These boys were raised by their maternal grandmother in their early childhood, while their normal brothers and sisters were raised by their parents. Both brothers identified with the grandmother and reported that their father had very little influence on their psychosexual development. In the only other published case of two transsexuals in the same family, Stoller and Baker (1973) reported on two transsexual brothers whose family background included a physically close relationship with the mother and an absent father. The authors hypothesized that the family dynamics of male transsexuals include a very close, symbiotic relationship with the mother. The mother often feels that her son is beautiful at birth, and she encourages physical closeness and feminine behaviors. The father is physically or psychologically absent from the home, and, therefore, does not disrupt this symbiotic relationship.

In a study of 43 Swedish transsexuals, Walinder (1967) found that the fathers of these transsexuals were significantly more likely than the control group to have been reported to the police for repeated drunkenness. Parental deprivation, as defined by death, divorce, illegitimacy, or placement away from the home, was significantly higher in the transsexual group, occurring in 54% of the cases.

Are Children with Sexual Identity Disorders More Often From Broken Homes?

Studies dealing with the influence of the father on gender-disturbed children are quite recent and relatively few in number. The results of these studies tend to corroborate the retrospective reports of adult homosexuals and transsexuals.

The fathers of male transsexual boys that Stoller (1969) has seen have often been perceived as passive and sometimes as effeminate themselves. In eight out of nine cases that Stoller reported, the father was frequently away from the home during the early years of the child's life; when the father was present, he was psychologically distant from the family members. Therefore, these boys did not have an adequate male role model with whom to identify. The fathers did not attenuate the excessively close relationship with the mother that is commonly observed. The relationship between the father and the mother was often distant and unhappy, but divorce was very uncommon. Stoller believes that the family constellation of male transsexuals differs from that of male homosexuals in several respects. While the mothers of both groups are domineering and overprotective, the mothers of transsexuals were particularly competitive with males during their own childhood and early adolescence and were more likely to encourage "blissful closeness" with their sons. While the parents of homosexuals are more likely to divorce, the parents of transsexuals are more likely to remain married despite their psychological and physical estrangement.

Green (1974) studied 38 feminine boys who were referred for such reasons as cross-dressing, expressed desires to be a girl and preferences for feminine activities. Based on his clinical observations of these boys, Green states that boyhood femininity is associated with a number of factors, including the absence of an older male model during the boy's first years of life, maternal dominance, early rejection by the father, and indifference to or encouragement of feminine behaviors by either parent. In this study, 34% of the feminine boys experienced paternal deprivation before the age of 4 years, compared to 8% of the United States population at large. When the fathers were physically present in the home, they were often psychologically distant. Approximately 75% of the feminine boys were described as preferring their mother, and approximately 7% preferred their fathers. In contrast, roughly half of the more masculine boys (in the control group) did not show a preference for either parent and were less likely to prefer their mothers when one parent was favored. In general, the families of feminine boys did not differ significantly from those of masculine boys with regard to marital-role division. Two differences that were found were that the fathers of feminine boys were more likely to be responsible for planning the family's leisure-time activities and to be the overall boss, while fathers of masculine boys were more likely to view both marriage partners as equal in these two domains.

Additional evidence that suggests that the fathers of cross-gender identified boys are psychologically distant from the family and do not provide adequate role models for the child comes from the case studies reported by Rosen and Teague (1974). The fathers of these gender-disturbed boys were not significant forces in policy setting in the family. They were nominally loving, but not openly rejecting or punitive. These fathers provided very little structured discipline for their children and were described as quiet and peripheral. Rosen and Teague suggested that the father's absence from the home and inability to be a model of masculinity may be related to the father's own disturbance in his masculine image and in his sense of sexual adequacy. Similar results were obtained by McCord, McCord, and Verden (1962), who found that the fathers of feminine boys were aloof and psychologically absent from the home, not involved in decision-making in the family, and ineffective as fathers and husbands. However, the fathers in this study, in contrast to the later findings of Rosen and Teague (1974), tended to be punitive and to either ignore or openly express their hatred for their sons. The only study of effeminate boys to date that has not reported disturbed family relationships is one by Zuger (1970).

How Were the Families of Gender Disturbed Children Studied in Rekers' Study Funded By the National Institute of Mental Health?

Forty-six male children were referred to Drs. G.A. Rekers, O. Ivar Lovaas, and A.C. Rosen at the Child Gender Clinic of the U.C.L.A. Psychology Department or to Dr. Rekers at the University of Florida Children's Mental Health Unit, by their pediatricians, psychologists, psychiatrists, schools, or other social agencies for evaluation and/or treatment of a potential problem in sex-role development. The subjects ranged in age from 3 to 13 years, with a mean of 7 years. Assessment and treatment procedures were undertaken with most of these children for the numerous clinical reasons discussed elsewhere (Rekers, 1977; Rekers, Bentler, Rosen, & Lovaas, 1977; Rekers, Rosen, Lovaas, & Bentler, 1978; Rosen, Rekers, & Bentler, 1978; see also other articles by Rekers in reference section).

The clinical case histories of the subjects obtained from several independent sources were examined in order to determine the physical presence, absence, or psychological relationship of biological fathers or father-surrogates in the home. If the father was absent from the home, the age of the son at the time of separation and the reason for the separation were recorded, if available. In some cases, data were available on the incidence of psychiatric history in the fathers. The number of older male siblings was recorded in the majority of cases.

In addition to historical data, information dealing with the respective roles of the mother and the father in the familywas obtained from selected items on the Rekers Behavior Checklist for Childhood Gender Problems (Rekers, 1972). Although the Rekers Behavior Checklist was completed for 14 boys, three cases were excluded from this study since no father or fahter-surrogate was present in the home and, therefore, no meaningful comparisons could be made with regard to the respective roles of the mother and the father. Ten of the cases were based on maternal reports; for one case, the father completed the checklist.

A second measure, the Bene-Anthony (1974) Family Relations Test was administered to the subjects to determine the degree of emotional involvement between the child and his mother and father. Data which included information on both the mother and the father were included for 28 of the 46 subjects. Four other subjects completed the test but were not used in this comparison due to their fathers' early absence from the home and the subjects' inability to remember anything concerning their fathers.

Diagnoses of the subjects made by three independent psychologists using two ten-point rating scales, one for sex-role behavior disturbance and one for sex-role identity disturbance, were available for 36 subjects. These two basic syndromes in children with sex-role development problems were theoretically differentiated by Rosen, Rekers and Friar (1977) and were empirically differentiated in a study by Bentler, Rekers and Rosen (1979). "Sex-role behavior disturbance" involves the maladaptive adoption of observable behaviors which are typically associated with the cross-sex role in conjunction with atypical avoidance of same sex-role behavior. "Sex-role identity disturbance" is conceptualized as a potentially more severe disorder which may or may not include cross-gender behavior, but which is chracterized by the desire to be a member of the opposite sex.

All three of the psychologists, proceeding from different theoretical orientations, rated each subject on the sex-role behavior scale were "1" indicated "extreme sex-role behavior disturbance," "2" indicated "marked sex-role behavior disturbance," "3" indicated "moderate sex-role behavior disturbance," "4" indicated "mild sex-role behavior disturbance" and "5" indicated "no sex-role behavior disturbance" (one-half unit ratings were permitted). Similarly, two of the psychologists made ratings on a scale of sex-role identity disturbance were "1" represented "profound cross-sex role identification", "2" represented "moderate cross sex-role identity", "3" represented "sex-role identity confusion," "4" represented "moderate sex-role identity confusion" and "5" represented "normal sex-role identification," again allowing for one-half point ratings.

What Was the Incidence of Psychiatric Problems of Parents of Gender Disturbed Boys?

One of the most striking findings dealt with the incidence of psychiatric problems in the families of these boys. Data on the psychiatric history of the family were available for 30 of the 46 subjects. Of these 30 families, two-thirds had a marked history of psychological problems or had reported having been under the care of a psychiatrist, psychologist or counselor. In 80% of these cases, the mothers had a history of mental health problems and/or treatment, while the corresponding figure for fathers was 45%. There is some overlap in these figures since, in five cases, both the mother and the father had a history of psychological problems. It is possible that these figures are somewhat inflated in that parents who have sought treatment for themselves may be more likely to seek treatment for their children. However, these findings suggest that the parents, and especially the mothers, of gender-disturbed boys have a history of less than adequate psychiatric adjustment.

Are Boys With Gender Disturbance More Likely Often From Father Absent Homes?

The findings with regard to paternal deprivation in these boys were consistent with those of much of the literature on the detrimental effects of father absence on psychosexual adjustment in the young male. Sixty-seven percent of the biological fathers of these boys (N = 46) were physically absent from the home. Thirty-six of these 46 boys received a diagnostic rating. In the eight boys who were judged to be the most profoundly disturbed, defined in terms of ratings of "2" and/or "1" on both the sex-role behavior and the sex-role identification scales, father absence was observed in all eight cases. It should be noted here that none of these boys were judged to be entirely free of disturbance on both the sex-role identification scales. In the remaining 28 gender-disturbed boys, paternal absence was observed in 54% of the cases. The difference in the frequency of paternal absence between the most severly disturbed and the less severely disturbed boys was significant at the .02 level of probability (Fisher's exact probability test). Therefore, the more profoundly disturbed the boy is, the more likely he was found to be separated from his biological father.

The mean age of the subjects (data available for 20 subjects) at the time of separation from the father was 3.55 years, with 80% of the boys being age 5 or under when separation occurred. The reason for paternal absence (N=17) was separation and/or divorce in 82% of the cases. One of the fathers was absent due to death, and in two instances, the mothers had never married (incidentally, one of these mothers was planning to have sex-reassignment surgery herself, and she preferred the male role).

For the entire group of 46 subjects, 37% had no adult male role model (either biological father or father substitute) present in the home. According to the comparable 1977 U.S. Census Bureau figures (1978), only 11.9% of all white children in the United States lived with their mothers only at the time of this study and were therefore without the benefit of a father or a father surrogate. Of the 36 boys in the present study that received a diagnostic rating, 75% of the most severely disturbed boys and 21% of the less severely disturbed boys had neither the biological father nor a father substitute living in the home ($p = .01$, Fischer's exact probability test).

When a father figure was physically present, he was often psychologically remote from the family. For the gender-disturbed boys for whom a biological father or father substitute was present in their home (29 out of the total group of 46 boys), 60% of the father figures were described as psychologically distant or remote by the other family members.

A similar pattern was observed with respect to the presence of older male siblings. The eight most severely gender-disturbed boys had at least one older male sibling in only two of the cases. Of the mild-to-moderately gender-disturbed boys, 48% had at least one older male sibling. While this trend was in the predicted direction, the analysis on the small sample failed to reach statistical significance ($p = .23$, Fisher's exact probability test).

A consistent picture emerges from the findings. The young males with the most pronounced gender disturbances tend to be less likely to have a male role model in the home, as compared to other gender-disturbed boys. This appears to be the case whether the male role model is the biological father, a father substitute or an older male sibling.

What Conclusions Can Be Drawn Concerning the Relationship Between Father Absence and Childhood Gender Disturbance?

In general, the picture of the fathers of gender-disturbed children found in these data is in sharp contrast to the image of the idealized father who promotes masculinity in his sons through his psychological and physical presence, his active involvement with his children and the family decision-making, his dominance and his nurturance. In many instances, no male role model existed in the home at all, whether it be father, father-substitute or older male sibling. This is in stark contrast to the atypical instances of male role absence in normal families. The absence of male role models with whom to identify was even more characteristic of the most severely disturbed effeminate boys. When a father or father-surrogate was present in the home, he was often psychologically remote from the family. Frequently, he was not involved in making family decisions and did not have an affectionate, nurturant relationship with his son. The adverse consequences of physical or psychological paternal deprivation on sex-role development is particularly evident in the case of gender-disturbed boys.

These various sources of clinical evidence suggest that fathering variables are correlated with male role disturbance, even though the direction of causality between these variables is inferred, not established, by strict observation. Only a longitudinal study of a large enough sample of boys selected at random at birth that would contain a number of male-role disturbed boys would provide definitive causal evidence in this regard. However, the relative rarity of male-role disturbance in the general population (one out of approximately 80,000 children as estimated by Rekers, Bentler, Rosen and Lovaas, 1977) would make such a study logistically impossible to conduct. We may conclude, however, that the data from retrospective reports of adults with gender disturbance and these correlational data from childhood clinical cases do implicate a critical relationship between male gender disturbances and variables pertaining to male role model deprivation.

What Measures Can Be Taken To Counteract the Effects of Paternal Deprivation in Broken Homes?

There are factors which can mitigate the negative influence of a fatherless home. The presence of a father substitute has generally been found to counteract, to a certain extent, the effects of paternal deprivation (Matthews, 1976; Sutton-Smith, Rosenberg, & Landy, 1968). For example, Santrock (1970) found that fathers' absence in black preschool boys was significantly related to femininity, dependency, and lack of aggression, as compared to father-present controls. However, the boys whose fathers were absent and who had a father substitute were significantly less dependent than the father-absent boys who had no father substitute. However, in one study (Drake & McDugall, 1977), the presence of a father substitute did not have an effect.

Another factor which has been found to lessen the effects of paternal deprivation is a positive attitude towards the father and towards men in general on the part of the mother (Biller & Baum, 1971; Matthews, 1976).

Therefore, it becomes obvious that the detrimental effects of paternal absence on sex-role development in boys do not occur in a vacuum. There are variables such as the presence of a father substitute or a positive attitudes toward men on the part of the mother which potentially serve to attenuate the negative consequences that father-absent boys often experience.

What Characteristics of the Father in the Intact Home Contribute to Normal Psychosexual Development?

As the research strategies have become more sophisticated over time, the focus of the studies on the father and psychosexual development in children shifted from comparisons of effects of fathers' absence vs. fathers' presence to studies of the paternal characteristics which are associated with masculine sons and daughters. It was not enough to examine the relationship between the fathers' actual physical absence from the home and sex-role development in children. It soon became evident that fathers who were *psychologically* absent from the home might also contribute to deficits in psychosexual development (Rosen & Teague, 1974[1]).

A number of different variables have been hypothesized as related to masculinity in sons. Perceived similarity to the father, availability, nurturance, dominance, and limit-setting have frequently been discussed within this context. As there have been a number of excellent reviews in this specific area (e.g., Biller, 1976; Lamb, 1976; Lynn, 1974, 1976), the present review focuses on the major findings and the practical implications of these findings.

The single most important variable related to appropriate sex-role identification in children is paternal nurturance. Consequently, the father who is affectionate towards and actively involved with his children is the father who is most likely to foster masculinity in his sons. Mussen and Rutherford (1963) found that appropriate sex-role preference in boys, as measured by the IT Scale, was correlated with father-son interactions which were characterized as warm, nurturant, and affectionate. In this study, high masculinity in boys was not related to explicit encouragement for masculine behaviors from their parents or to the degree of parental masculinity or femininity.

The overwhelming majority of the research studies indicates that fathers who are affectionate, nurturant, and actively involved in childrearing are more likely to have masculine sons (Hetherington, 1964; Lamb, 1976; Mussen & Distler, 1960; Payne & Mussen, 1956). This line of research tends to support the view that boys are much more likely to identify with their fathers if their interactions with them are rewarding and affectionate (Mussen & Distler, 1960). Like boys, sex-role preference in girls seems to be related to a warm, nurturant relationship with the same-sexed parent, that is, the mother. However, the fathers' influence on daughters is quite different. Feminine girls tend to have highly masculine fathers who encourage feminine behaviors in their daughters.

Less positive results have been obtained with regards to the other variables which have been hypothesized to contribute to appropriate sex-typing in children. In general, research on the issue of perceived similarity to the same-sex parent has not been very productive. For example, Gray (1959) found no significant differences on peer ratings of sex-appropriate behavior between children who perceived themselves as similar to the same-sexed parent and those who perceived themselves as similar to the opposite-sexed parent. Similarly, research on paternal availability has not proven to be particularly fruitful. Reis and Gold (1977) found no differences in sex-role preferences in boys whose fathers were more available as opposed to boys whose fathers were relatively unavailable. Several authors (e.g., Biller, 1976; Earls, 1976) have concluded that it is the quality of the father-son relationship, not the quantity of interactions between them, that is important. The conclusion is in accordance with the numerous studies that have linked masculinity in boys to paternal nurturance.

Some authors have suggested that the power distribution of the family influences sex-role development in children (Hetherington, 1965). According to this view, the child is most likely to identify with the parent who is the dominant figure in the household. The data on parental dominance and identification in children is somewhat equivocal. Hetherington (1965), using the IT Scale, found that boys from homes in which the mother was the dominant figure exhibited more feminine sex-role preferences than did boys from father-dominant homes. Neither paternal nor maternal dominance had an effect on the sex-role preferences of girls, however. Hoffman (1961) found that boys who chose a female when asked who they wanted to be like when they grew up were from homes where the mother was the dominant parent. In this study, a similar trend was found for girls. That is, girls who chose a male in response to the same question came from homes in which the mother was the dominant parent. Both girls and boys from mother-dominant homes were more likely to indicate that they disliked the opposite sex on sociometric ratings. In turn, they were more likely to be disliked by the opposite sex. Contradictory results have been reported by Greenstein (1966), who found no evidence that sex-typing was related to the power distribution of the family. Although Biller (1968) found that paternal dominance was more important than paternal nurturance to the masculine development of sons, Lynn (1974) cites studies which indicate that fathers who are both dominant and nurturant are more likely to have sons who are masculine in their sex-role preference. Additional evidence which suggests that nurturance mediates the effects of paternal dominance was found by Hetherington and Deur (1971).

A similar relationship to that of paternal dominance and nurturance has been suggested for paternal limit-setting and nurturance (Biller, 1976; Lamb, 1976). This relationship has been proposed in an attempt to resolve the contradictions in the literature on paternal limit-setting. For example, Mussen and Distler (1959) reported that highly masculine boys tend to perceive their fathers as punitive and threatening. In another study by the same researchers (Mussen & Distler, 1960), the home environments of highly masculine boys were permissive and nonpunitive. Both Lamb (1976) and Biller (1976) cite evidence that indicates that paternal limit-setting is related to masculinity in boys only if the father is also nurturant.

Status of the Research Literature and Unanswered Questions

Although this research review has selectively focused on the role of the father in the establishment and development of sexual identity in children, it should be noted that single causal explanations are rarely appropriate for more than the most simple of phenomena. Rather, sex-role learning is undoubtedly the result of a number of different factors, including the influence of the father, the mother, the peer group, the media, and the myriad of institutions and agents of society with whom the child must come in contact. Nevertheless, the parents are the most significant influences in the earliest years of a child's life, the period in which sexual identity is established (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972).

In that the father is the parent who is most actively concerned with sex-typing, it seems reasonable to assume that he would have a significant impact on the establishment of psychosexual identity in his children. In fact, the available data suggest that the father is intricately related to psychosexual health in children. We have seen that paternal absence can result in deficits in sex-role development, especially in boys. Similarly, the negative effects of psychological absence by the father are readily evident. On a more positive note, we have seen that the detrimental influence of paternal absence may be mitigated by the presence of other male role models. Normal psychosexual development is facilitated by the father who is affectionate, nurturant, and actively involved with his children. In addition to being nurturant, the father must also be perceived as dominant and active in making family decisions.

At present, the role of the father in the family may be quickly changing. The nature of his role in the future and the consequences that his altered role may have on the psychosexual development of children are undetermined. On the one hand, the decline of the nuclear family which has occurred in recent years may have a debilitating effect on the establishment of psychosexual identity in many children, as has been suggested by the studies of paternal deprivation.

Are the Effects of Divorce Positive or Negative for Children?

In a review of effects of divorce on children, Judith Wallerstein, the principal investigator of the "Children of Divorce Project" of the Marin Community Mental Health Center in California concluded:

> Initially, almost all children and many adolescents experience divorce as painful and as disruptive of their lives, and their suffering is compounded by both unrealistic and realistic fears. These fears are related to the following factors: a heightened sense of vulnerability, sadness at the loss of the protected structure of the family and of the parent who does not retain custody, guilt over fantasized or actual misdeeds that may have contributed to parents' quarrels (although such fantasies are not found in all children), worry over distressed parents, anger at the parent or parents who have disrupted the child's world, shame regarding parents' behavior, a sense of being alone, and concern about being different from peers. For many children and adolescents, the overall initial response to divorce can properly be considered a reactive depression. There is no evidence that these initial reactions are muted or are experienced as less painful because of the high incidence of divorce taking place in the surrounding community.

Nevertheless, there have been statements in the professional literature, surprisingly, to the contrary. For instance, Michael Lamb (1977) concluded: "There is little support for the (assumption) that divorce is necessarily harmful.... (p. 163)." Although he concluded that children of divorced aprents are "at risk" for psychological damage, he also stated: "Divorce can be beneficial to children, inasmuch as it signals the termination of hostilities, uncertainties, and harmful hatefulness" (p. 171). Similarly, Phyllis McGrab (1978) acknowledged the sense of loss, the sense of failure, and the difficult transitions often associated with divorce for the child. But she also speculated, "When we consider the effect of divorce or separation on children, we must equally consider the effects of living in a home where there may be ongoing tension, conflict and stress. 'For the sake of the child' regardless of the short and long-term consequences, divorce or separation at times is the most viable solution to optimizing the potential of that child for sound emotional and personal growth." (p. 233).

Too often, in the professional literature, a supposed beneficial effect of divorce is presumed by making just this type of comparison: compared to the conflict in a poor marriage, wouldn't the child be better off, after all, if the parents divorced? What is often omitted from the discussion is any potential for a third alternative for both the parents and the child: namely, could the problems of the marriage be solved or resolved with some kind of help thereby eliminating the conflict and stress for the child. We must keep this third alternative in mind and not fatalistically assume that the divorce rate will continue at the present or higher rate, and that therefore somehow we must conclude that divorce is the best way out for many children. Too often, there is the assumption that nothing could be done to help solve the problem causing the conflict in the marriage.

From the child development research available, I would conclude that the child benefits most from having two parents in the home who are cooperative, nurturant and loving to one another and the child. If marital conflict occurs, the most desirable alternative for the couple and the child would be to find solutions to the conflict and to strengthen the family relationships including the marital bond. In this context, divorce is not the "solution" to marital conflict, but instead divorce merely trades one set of problems for a new set of problems for both the child as well as for the couple. Divorce should be viewed as an extreme measure of last resort, something akin to amputation of a limb if one's body is affected by gangrene and no medical treatment has succeeded.

The next logical question has to do with preventative education approaches for strengthening marriages and families both for the benefit of the child as well as for the benefit of the married couple.

Can Family Well-Being Be Promoted to Decrease the Nation's Current Rate of Broken Homes?

Many serious human development problems and marital conflict could be prevented or corrected in early stages if families were better equipped to recognize family strengths and to build upon those strengths. Many needy families could benefit from learning about the successful and preventative practices commonly used in families with high levels of marital satisfaction and well-being.

The initial step toward eventual dissemination of information on building stronger families would be to gather research and family life education materials which identify relationship factors of successful marriages and families. For example, the parenting practices of many families promote a work-orientation and successful job acquisition and employment retention by youth, and other families could benefit from the identification of those practices and the wide-spread application of those practices.

The root problem of many categorical dysfunctions (such as pregnant teens, or runaway youth) is in the family system, including the marriage relationship. To address all social service efforts to the remediation of the categorical problem can constitute only symptomic relief only, rather than addressing the underlying family need.

There has been a parallel tendency for families to delegate certain functions to outside institutions. For example, the health needs of a family might be inappropriately delegated entirely to the health care system and physicians, thereby neglecting the proper parental roles in preventative measures for health maintenance. Parent education curricula on family health need to be catelogued in order to foster greater dissemination to voluntary/private local community organizations.

The federal government has a potentially strategic role in promoting the efficient gathering of informational resources on how marriage relationships and parenting roles can be strengthened to give children and youth more confidence, self-respect and competence to succeed in today's world. The parental role is central in encouraging youth and in providing for their needs for the largest portion of mainstream American families. The needs of child and youth development and the goal of prevention of serious dysfunctions will be best served by reinforcing the value and centrality of the stable family unit and parental role.

Often, there are strong and effective resources available from a variety of sources, which exist in "bits and pieces" in various places around the country. Unfortunately, the local volunteer community worker (such as scout leader, church education director or youth leader, or PTA leader) does not typically have the awareness of the availability of these family life education materials, nor the time to put them together in a sequence of programming which could serve to better equip families to prevent problems. Therefore, there is a need for an informationa resource center to gather this strategic set of materials, to catalogue them, and to thereby increase accessability of the materials already available.

A federal information resource center could also gather data and research study results on variables which have an impact upon marriage and family life, with an emphasis upon the preventative goal for improving family life in America.

Could Family Life Education Decrease Separation and Divorce Rates?

Research with families (Stinnett, 1981) has identified six characteristics of strong families. Families identified by rural leaders as strong families were families that:

1. Knew how to express appreciation to one another.
2. Knew how, and spent time together.
3. Had skills in family communication.
4. Had a high degree of commitment to the idea of family and to their own family.
5. Had a high degree of religious orientation.
6. Had the ability to deal with crisis in a positive manner.

These characteristics of strong families can be threatened by rapid social change. They can also be cultivated and enhanced by effective education, intergenerational networks, self help groups, and cooperation between public and private organizations. There is need to communicate to families ways in which the characteristics of strong families are developed and expressed in families at different life-stages, e.g., families with young children, families with adolescents, families in middle years with grown children and frail elderly. Brammer and Abrego (1981) and Danish (1981) have emphasized that some families need help to prepare for and creatively move through the developmental transitions of the family life span. They stress that parenting and other life events can be anticipated and offer opportunities for enhancement through presenting models and skill building.

> Family life (and parent) education programs communicate an expectant belief that each family unit has within it dormant capacities for coping with transitions. In spite of their coping capacities, many families get blocked at transition points by employing repetitive patterns that maintain the family system, resisting family adaptation and development. Experimental (parent) education programs help families draw upon creative resources inside and outside of themselves to find new ways to 'develop through' difficult transitions. (Brammer and Abrego, pp. 19, 31).

The family is a social organism whose potential is sometimes uncultivated, or is only partially actualized, because its members--having grown up in it--do not recognize its identity, nature and purpose. Some may take it for granted, others may think its circumstances cannot change. The vitality of a social organism is dependent upon the care and attention its members give to its maintenance and well-being. That is, a social organism serves its members best as they in turn serve it (Yankelovich New Rules, 1981). We need to help families recognize their strengths and their role as the integrating influence for their members. The Carnegie Council of Children (Keniston, 1979) pointed out that today's parents are frustrated by the great number of socializing institutions who seem to be directing the lives of their children.

"As a result, the parent today is usually a coordinator without a voice or authority...If parents are frustrated, it is no wonder; for although they have the responsibility for their children's lives, they hardly ever have the voice, the authority or the power to make others listen to them." (Keniston, 1977, p. 18).

Keniston and others (White, 1979; Spock, 1980) emphasize that we need to provide guidance and encouragement for families to affirm and perform their role as the primary teaching and support institution. White declared that we need "to recognize that the first priority is to prepare and assist families as the child's first educational delivery system" (White, 1979, p. 193). Spock (1980) suggested that the proliferation of information about parenting has sometimes confused parents and caused them to lose confidence. Keniston (1977) stated "Americans today wonder whether they are doing a good job as parents, but are unable to define what a good job is. In droves they seek expert advice" (p. 2). Alison Clarke-Stewart (1978) estimated that 23 million parenting and child-rearing primers had been bought in a five year period.

In October 1981, for the first time, the professional periodical, Family Relations: Journal of Applied Family and Child Studies devoted a special issue to Family Life Education. It underscored the fact that there is a growing body of information on family life and a growing interest in developing family education programs. However, there is a problem of getting the information to the families. Families do not have time and/or they sometimes encounter other logistic or psychological problems that keep them from attending special meetings for family education and consultation (Cromwell and Cromwell, 1980). Our strategies need to be improved for taking family education resources into gatherings and educational activities in which families are already participating, e.g., churches, schools, health centers, cooperative extension. Our emphasis must be on enhancing the strengths of families and thus preventing pathologies, rather than directing our energies toward the pathologies. However, in our program of prevention we need to keep in mind the pluralism of our society. While characteristics of strong families are similar, Herbert Otto (1979) has demonstrated that the modes of developing and experiencing that strength will vary with the culture.

At the University of Minnesota, the work of McCubbin (1980) and others is demonstrating that:

> The convergence of two parallel lines of research, the study of family strengths and the study of families under stress, appears to have potential in advancing our understanding of family behavior under a range of circumstances...The picture of family strengths which emerges from this research is twofold. First, family strengths are viewed as having an active dimension commonly referred to as coping. Second, this active process includes the family's transactions with the community, and the procurement of social support from neighbors...we appear to be moving toward a more dynamic model of family strengths which takes into consideration not only what the family has internally and how it manages available strengths and resources, but how it interacts with the community in securing a vital social resource called support. (p. 189)

What McCubbin and other researchers (Burr, 1973; Hansen and Hill, 1964; Hill, 1949) are pointing out is that supportive interaction and shared information between family members and others in the community are protective against the adverse consequences of life stress. In his presidential address to the American Psychosomatic Society, Sidney Cobb (1976) stated "We have often seen strong and often quite hard evidence, repeated over a variety of transitions in the life cycle from birth to death, that social support is protective...that adequate social support can protect people in crisis from a wide variety of pathological states; from low birth weight to death, from arthritis through tuberculosis to depression, alcoholism and other psychiatric illnesses...We should start now to teach all our patients, both well and sick, how to give and receive social support" (310, 312).

The remarks of Dr. F. Ivan Hye (1980) underscore the emphasis of this proposal by commenting on his research on runaways.

> The research on runaways highlights the need for effective parent-education program in the United States. It will be most effective if it can be timed when the young people become parents--when they feel a need for information, and can immediately apply its principles. It needs to be based on valid theory and research...The preparation of valid parent-education materials requires time to search the professional literature exhaustively and care in organization and writing. Finally, as valid, effective materials are available, the means must be developed to disseminate them effectively to parents rearing children (p. 238).

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) pointed out that the field of children's service is one side in that it knows far more about children than about how to strengthen the environment around them. The Task Force on Families of the Extension Committee on Policy recently outlined the importance both of providing education to families and to the agencies that work with families (ECOP, 1981; Daly, 1981).

The key concept emerging from both research and practice is that in each community there needs to be a family life educator or family life education center that gives leadership to the community. The leadership will help the community to assess the kind of climate that is impacting on families and the kinds of resources that are currently available for families. It will help develop coordination among the different programs offered by various groups for strengthening families, so as to gain maximum efficiency for the family life program efforts in the community and also to identify areas of family need that are not being addressed.

Various professions and community groups need assistance to relate their activities to the creative millieu present in strong families. Those professions and groups need assistance to recognize the strengths in other supportive networks of which families are a part. Self-help networks and more formal institutions, such as churches and schools, join together with families in maintaining a climate for growth and the actualization of human potential.

It is important for famiies to have continuing guidance concerning ways to achieve a successful marriage and family life. That guidance should include: 1) models illustrating family strengths, 2) opportunities to develop necessary skills, and 3) opportunities to consider developmental changes in their families and in the culture around them. This may be done in separate family life programs. It will most frequently be done as different agencies and groups in the community interact with families and family members in the normal course of life events, e.g., children entering school, middle-aged parents considering retirement. Therefore we need to assist those agencies to be prepared to provide appropriate marriage and family education resources to the families they encounter.

There is a growing body of information on family life and a growing interest in developing family life programs. However, there is a problem of getting the information to the families. Families do not have time and/or they sometimes experience the psychological obstacles, to come to special programs in the community on family life education (Cromwell). The most effective strategy seems to be to take family education into gatherings and educational activities in which they are already participating.

Efficient and useful training materials could be developed and made available to community leaders to assist them to develop family life education programs. Their programs would help families affirm and develop their own strengths and become prepared for establishing and maintaining family support systems as part of the larger community.

New family life education approaches could be developed and promoted across the nation (a) to foster family self-sufficiency, (b) to help preserve marriages and promote family stability, (c) to help prevent neglect, abuse, or mistreatment of vulnerable family members, (d) to promote family care for independent living as an alternative to institutionalization where possible, and (e) to stimulate the improved use of private voluntary organizational resources to deliver human services to families experiencing crises or stress.

To decrease the number of broken families, we need (a) to promote local service delivery to families which is effective and cost efficient, (b) to facilitate family life education program evaluation, (c) to train local community leaders in marriage enrichment education, (d) to develop model curricula on strengthening families for potential nation-wide use, and (e) to build the capacity of local organizations to meet human and family needs, instead of turning to governmental services.

What Kinds of Family Life Education Resources Are Needed by Local Community Organizations to Promote Marital Stability?

Many of the existing privately-supported community service organizations have historically been interested in preventative, educational and "wellness" human services. However, they could be better equipped to serve families if training "packages" on parent education were more readily available, and if a nation-wide training program were available on a regional basis to train volunteer community leaders to conduct marriage enrichment and parent education workshops and seminars on the themes of prevention and building family strengths.

So, with proper training curricula (printed, film and/or videotape), plus training sessions for workshop leaders (church youth directors, scout leaders, PTA leaders, charitable organization volunteers), existing private organizations could provide training services to better equip married parents to build family strengths and competence and to thereby prevent many occurrences of child and youth dysfunction.

Child development research supports the vital need of children to have competent parents providing for their needs. Parental nurturance, love and involvement with providing resources (emotional, educational and economic) to children are of primary importance. Preventative premarriage education and parent education programs carried out by local volunteer community leaders could be vitally supportive to that pivotal parental role. In this way, parental competence can be highlighted, more effective parental responsiblity for their children's welfare can be promoted, and the incidence of divorce and separation could be decreased.

By providing effective program packages that stimulate volunteer leadership in family life education, there will be an increased responsiveness of the private and voluntary sector to the needs of families.

By direct practical educational opportunities for voluntary community leaders to learn how to use family enrichment education materials, there will result an increased family access to useful and relevant information which will enable them to more effectively cope with stresses upon the marriage relationship and parenting role.

By providing community service organizations the training materials for parents together with workshops to train the trainers, the efforts of those community service organizations will be increased to use volunteers in child, youth and family services.

And by providing these regional volunteer training sessions on the use of family life education materials across the nation, the result will be an anticipated increase in the involvement of the private and voluntary sectors in developing workable alternatives which will ultimately reduce the need for programs serving children, youth and families

The best training materials need to be identified from among those successfully used in some local communities already. This would enable the widespread application of the same materials in the other communities of the nation.

The training packages on the parenting role may need to be compiled in different formats for various constituencies, to be maximally available and useful. Part of the assessment of the available marriage enrichment and parenting materials would take this factor into account, thereby providing several optional formats for the curricula assembled.

While there is growing activity in marriage enrichment and family life education around the country, people at the grass roots are largely unaware of the materials. And when they encounter one set of materials they do not know what else is available and therefore they often feel concerned about using it. They need an opportunity to know the range of materials that are available and how to choose and relate the materials to their particular constituency.

In a recent article setting forth the importance of making family life education available through the many avenues and organizations where families are normally encountered, the Guerneys (1981) listed such agencies as The National Childbirth Association, La Leche, family service agencies, consultation and education departments of mental health centers, and pediatric departments.

There is a growing desire around the nation to develop programs of prevention through offering parent education, marriage enrichment and fmaily education that help families recognize and build on their strengths.

How Could the Federal Government Help Equip Local Community Organizations to Reduce the Number of Broken Homes?

Existing community leaders in private volunteer social organizations need both training and programming materials to motivate and equip individuals and families to provide natural networks of social support and service to one another, to thereby decrease the incidence of separation and divorce, which in turn should decrease requests for government services. New methods and innovative techniques need to be developed to foster private and voluntary social service support to families. The Office for Families in the Administration for Children, Youth and Families in the Department of Health and Human Services could be funded to develop local leadership training procedures and family life education program materials for widespread applicability to many tupes of private, voluntary community organizations, including Scouts, YMCAs, counseling centers and churces. These training procedures and family life education materials should be mandated

(1) to promote the values of family stability, (2) to provide training to families on how to strengthen marital relationships, and (3) to emphasize the father's important role in child development.

The President's Commission on Mental Health (Task Panel Reports, Vol. II, 1978) made the following observation and recommendation:

> Social and community support systems can help to contribute to a sense of well-being and of competent functioning (and thus be preventive). They can aid in reducing the negative consequences of stressful life events and thus bridge the treatment and rehabilitative levels of prevention. What is even more significant is that utilization of social and community support systems can provide for constructive innovation and systemic change...moving toward a comprehensive human service system with a holistic orientation that wuld remedy some of the defects of our present fragmented and uncoordinated efforts.
>
> The Task Panel on Community Support Systems recommends a major new Federal initiative to achieve the following objectives:
>
> > Recognize and strengthen the natural networks to which people belong and on which they depend--families; kin, kith, friendship, and neighborhood social networks; work relationships; religious denominations and congregations; and self-help groups and other voluntary associations based on principles of intimacy and mutual aid.
> >
> > Develop educational strategies to inform the general public and caregiving professionals on the nature and function of natural helping networks and on the importance of attachments and mutuality for well-being.
> >
> > Initiate research to provide national data periodically on social support and on natural helping networks in American society, to monitor the direction and magnitude of changes in these aspects of American life, and to increase knowledge of how best to attain the above objectives.
>
> Task Panel Reports Vol. II, p. 144.

The Task Panel noted further that religious institutions represent a major, "partially tapped" resource (Task Panel, 1978, p. 192). Veroff (1976) found that more people said they would turn to clergy than to any other helping professional in time of need. (Task Panel, 1978, p. 192).

> ...Also, churches and synagogues are the major transgenerational organizations in most communities and thus have exceptional opportunities to help people cope creatively with the developmental crisis which occur throughout the life cycle, and help build communication bridges between generations." Task Panel Reports, Vol. II, p. 192.

The literature that describes the effects of support network involvement clearly indicates its potential for the reduction of request for services currently provided by the federal government. For example, there is indication that network participation reduces incidence rates of family violence (Caplan, 1974), assists in adjustment to divorce (Heatherington & Cox, 1977), and even affects adjustment rates to societal issues like economic depression (Drabek & Boggs, 1968).

There is a need to transfer existing knowledge on how to build family stability and to enhance family support networks to local community service organizations, and private charitable organizations which have enormous potential for providing preventative social services in a volunteer framework.

Too much federal spending in the past has assumed that the incidence of broken families will continue to escalate unabated, and that government should only finance a growing list of specialized social services where professional workers try to patch up the side effects of broken families on children--such as delinquency, runaways, school failure, mental disorders, health and multitional problems and child abuse. Instead, a greater protion of federal spending should be redirected to the more strategic use of resources to develop improved cost effective methods of addressing social needs of individuals and families at the community level, and to promote the building of family strengths and self-sufficienty as well as effective volunteer human services, and to evaluate demonstration projects with potential for wide-spread national application without continued federal funding. More funding should be directed to the Office for Families with the requirement that projects be funded to prevent divorce and separation in the first place. New projects are needed (1) to develop and enhance national social and community support systems by training leaders in community churches and synagogues to conduct preventative family life education programs. 2) to evaluate the effectiveness of programs in strengthening the natural community helping networks and social support to famioies facing marital problems. (3) To thereby provide family stability, to decrease the probability of family break-up (divorce and run-away children), to strengthen families and to be able to care for the handicapped, the aged, and others at home as an alternative to government-subsidized institutionalization. (4) To provide family cluster support groups in local organizations and congregations where families can help other families in short-term or long-term stresses which would otherwise result in divorce or separation or institutionalization of an individual in the absence of such support networks.

Margaret Sawin (1981) has reviewed ways in which church and family interests are reciprocal and make the church one logical and concerned place for dealing with family issues. While the minister, priest or rabbi is the key leader, the majority of clergy have only had "training in the area of remedial work rather than prevention or enrichment" (Sawin, 1981, p. 533). Federal programs could provide training and curricula to support local active programs of family education which focuses on helping families in communities to recognize and build on their strengths, to establish both a strong bulwark of prevention as well as a community of families capable and motivated to reach out in supportive and caring ways to individuals and families in stress.

What Kind of Programs and Materials Are Needed to Develop New Local Community Efforts Designed to Prevent Broken Homes?

New materials need to be developed to be used to train leaders in the existing structures of local organizations, churches and synagogues to build strong families. Two types of materials need to be developed: one for leaders and one for the participating families to be implemented in existing local community settings, thereby tying into and enhancing already existing helping networks. The federal government could thereby mobilize existing leadership in ongoing local social institutions who in turn can mobilize the strengths of families into a preventative action oriented program.

Materials could be designed to have an effective impact on two levels. First, the training curriculum could be designed to strengthen families by developing skills that past research has shown to be associated with strong families (Stinnett, et al., 1978). This is an effort to prevent families from being overwhelmed by crisis associated with drug abuse, foster home placements, request for mental health and family services, etc., thereby enabling families to rely on their own social networks rather than being forced by circumstances to rely exclusively on governmental social agencies. Second, there could be a useful application of these skills to the formation of family support networks within the local community in conformity with the recomendation of the president's task force on mental health (1978).

Since such materials have not yet been developed and since they would have broad application to many settings such as work, clubs, churches and schools, it is critical that they prove to have high effectiveness and be as cost efficient as possible. Because the materials would be intended for widespread application for minimal cost to potential users, evaluation of program results assumes particular importance as a way of assuring dissemination of only a program of demonstrated quality and effectiveness.

If the federal government funded the development of family life education materials, they would then be available for use on a widespread basis at no additional cost to the government. Scout groups, PTAs, churches, YMCA's, local service clubs and other voluntary community organizations could obtain the training materials for a modest cost. They likewise could order curricula for individual families, or families could purchase their own booklets. In such voluntary organizations, it is anticipated that there would be virtually no new paid staff to implement the family life education program. Therefore the widespread use of this program is fundable on its own. Community leaders could be provided valuable training on how to encourage families to develop into support networks which could greatly enhance marital and family stability.

This approach is feasible, also, because the community structures already exist for its implementation, and the principal trainers already meet face-to-face with numerous families weekly and their organizations have weekly publications to communicate new and innovative programs such as this. Existing families are caregiving units and this strategic particpation by the federal Office for Families wuld be useful and efficient in equipping families to maintain and to build their care-giving capacities.

The widespread use and application of federally-developed family life education materials fostering family values and skills in preserving marriage could result in less institutionalization of youth, as families are better equipped to recognize growth processes and to rely on local support networks. The proposed curricula could encourage and help to equip families to take children and youth with developmental disabilities or other social problems, or aged and inform individuals into local homes of other families for short-term crisis care which would reduce demand for governmental funding of additional foster care or institutionalization. This promotion of family clusters in communities should benefit lower income children and families The skills in family life to be taught in the curriculum materials should not only strengthen individual marriages and families but also equip some families to provide for the needs of other local families in social outreach.

Senator DENTON. Dr. Rekers, you have said some words in paragraphs with which I have to acknowledge that I agree very much. In view of the lack of time here, we will not have many oral questions to ask.

Did you discriminate in your findings as to sexual-identity problems as to the type or cause of father absence? You took it up by age, and so forth, and how about type of cause, like death versus divorce versus——

Mr. REKERS. Eighty-two percent had fathers absent because of divorce and separation. Then we had 6 percent with father absent due to the death of the father and 12 percent born to an unwed mother, with father absent. It actually paralleled in some respects the national statistics on single-parent homes in terms of the cause for father absence.

Senator DENTON. Well, some of your recommendations regarding Government activity I will bring to the attention of the new Secretary, Mrs. Heckler. I think you are right, and I think that much of it can be done by private, local, community service organizations. As you probably know, it is largely a matter of how the Government looks upon its role and what the tone of the Nation's leadership is with respect to these value-oriented opinions. But I think they are based on findings which are inevitably going to confirm truths.

Dr. Rich, have you yet been able to measure the results of your efforts to stimulate learning among schoolchildren by involving their parents?

Ms. RICH. Yes, we have. The projects for which we have data are indicated on the last three pages of my written testimony.

Senator DENTON. I saw those at the beginning. OK. I can read them.

Ms. RICH. In all of those projects we have been able to identify significant student gain, and this is on standardized achievement tests. We have also identified, increased adult satisfaction in the parenting role.

I would like to suggest that right now these programs could be carried on in every city and hamlet of this country. It is both frustrating to me, and it is unclear, really, why it is that we cannot bring these self-help programs now into the homes and into the schools across the country. It is a very cost-effective approach. It is an academically effective approach. It is a people effective approach. It is commonsense. I urge all who are interested to look at our data, to look at our programs, and to see how they could be replicated; I would be delighted to work with them.

Senator DENTON. We have been trying to do that since I have had this job. There are such examples as a black priest out in Chicago, Father Clements, who had an idea that if each black church would adopt one black child, a great deal could be done about the children on the streets who have no parents.

As I recall his testimony here in this room, on the first day he tried that in his own church, 17 children were adopted by that congregation. And it seems to me that that kind of idea needs to be replicated if it takes Government money to disseminate the idea.

Ms. RICH. Right.

Senator DENTON. And there is not enough, in my opinion, of that kind of governmental financial involvement. There is too much involvement going down through the bureaucracy with the entire Government or the entire problem being handled by Government workers who require Government money. We have out there a wealth of volunteers who know what they are doing, and private organizations who are receiving their money from private sources, who could double their size and perhaps quintuple their effect, if the Government would add a very small amount to take care of expenses—not salaries, just expenses. Then you already are working with a viable, non-self-interested, altruistic, effective organization.

And I am going to try to get more of that done. We have a number of ways in which it is done now, but it is not conceived as a separate and distinct way of going at the welfare problem. We have the President's task force on private sector initiative, which is purely private. There is no Government money involved with that.

And then we have on the other hand the purely Government bureaucratic big-brother-does-it-all-type approach with only accidental, as it were, applications of the kind of thing I just discussed. I think that this new approach should be categorized and recognized as a genre in itself which has yet to be identified and yet to be exploited.

Your program, Dr. Rich, falls in the category, in my opinion, of those which perhaps could be helped some way without paying you, but by permitting, say, the dissemination of your methodology.

Ms. RICH. This is what I have been trying to do for years. Our small, nonprofit organization needs support to be able to reach parents across the country. Parents are the most potent volunteers of all. Virtually every home is a citadel of care and concern for children. We have to build on that core and concern.

What families want are some practical ideas. Once they have them, they use them and they use them very effectively.

Senator DENTON. I have heard some references today to the distinction between black and white. While I have to acknowledge that there are more black children abandoned, more divorces in the black community, I will also acknowledge that in no sector of our society, particularly among those who live in an urban environment, are there more fervent advocates of the kinds of profamily-support activities that have been discussed here today.

I know black men my age who are raising their grandchildren and their grandnephews and teaching them better than I taught my own children. And I want to acknowledge that since that came up several times during this hearing today.

Thank you very much for your testimony.

Ms. RICH. Thank you.

Senator DENTON. We will be asking you some questions in writing and hope to enjoy a further rapport with you for our own improvement. We will continue our series of oversight hearings on the broken family on Thursday of this week at 9:30 a.m. in this same room.

[The following information was received for the record:]

Dr. Orley R. Herron
President, National College of Education
Member, Family Research Council

Testimony on Divorce
Senate Subcommittee on Family and Human Services
Committee on Labor and Human Resources

It's the national tragedy that's as American as apple pie. I'm talking about divorce--that once-scandalous social concern that today is as common as crabgrass.

Half of American marriages--about a million a year--are ending in divorce.[1] And, perhaps because it is so common, we tend to underestimate its consequences.

But that's a mistake, especially when children are involved. Dealing with parental divorce is a lifetime emotional struggle, and most children never give up the fantasy that their parents will someday reunite. Dr. Mary Schneider, a National College of Education psychologist, shared this insight with me in discussions about her research on the children of divorce.

In a recent article, co-written with Kay L. Baird, she movingly described the distress these children experience:

> Divorce offers children a real challenge to their basic sense of security and trust. It furnishes them with a rending example of the dissolution of love. Children learn, to their dismay, that love need not be permanent.[2]

But many divorced parents are so drained by their own emotional, financial, legal and social problems that they fail to recognize the pain their children experience--particularly if the youngsters show no overt behavioral difficulties. Even when parents can see a child's trauma, they may lack the emotional and physical strength to deal with it.

Society must help them. And one of the most effective vehicles is the schools. Dr. Schneider has been a leader in developing guidelines for group counseling of children of divorce in the elementary school. She has found that the strain divorced parents experience

> ...often results in a willingness to admit their inability to give the child all the objective support the child craves, and they view the divorce group as a welcome support system. Regardless of the parental reaction to the group, it has been our experience that almost every child affected by divorce desires group membership. Children will work hard to convince a reluctant parent to let them join the divorce group.[3]

How do divorce groups help children? In her research, Dr. Schneider gives a fascinating account of the therapeutic process:

> When a group is offered on the topic of divorce, children begin to feel that divorce is not shameful and horrible. Just being able to talk about divorce divests it of some of its negative power.[4]
>
> . . . .
>
> Often, the exposition of personal experiences in a divorce group takes on the semblance of the telling of 'war stories,' with children attempting to top one another....The children often say, 'You think that's bad? Let me tell you what happened to me....'[5]
>
> . . . .
>
> Usually each child in the group will have at least one story or event that was traumatic for them. This story will be told and retold throughout the history of the group. The child egocentrically expects this story to hold the same shock value for the group that it holds for him or her. With each telling, the story is stripped of more and more of its tragic power. In addition, telling the story gives the children the opportunity to...[look] to the other group members in an effort to gauge how much... should be felt. The group's affective response is that the event was not that terrible, and the child becomes surrounded by peers who effectively validate that bad experiences are survivable. This peer validation for children in the early school years is a developmental essential and holds much more therapeutic impact than confirmation from an adult counselor alone.[6]

I submit that no school district in this nation should be without a program similar to the one described by Dr. Schneider.

But that is not enough. Why salve the wounds of divorce when we can take steps to prevent them?

Isn't there a place in our schools for discussion of that once-cherished tradition, marriage? The battle over sex education curricula is meaningless without it, yet, too often, marriage ranks as no more than a textbook-dull aside in a discussion of reproductive plumbing. We hear endlessly about "the joy of sex," but who is bothering to teach our kids to celebrate that homely old virtue, faithfulness?

They will certainly not learn it from television, which is conditioning children to believe that, in order to be happy and fulfilled, you must be entertained. In a subtle, if unintentional manner, television gives kids the impression that life can be capsulized in 30-minute segments, and if you don't like the way it's turning out, you can turn it off. Where on television do you see the extended continuity needed to sustain and nurture a permanent relationship?

So many children today grow up in families embittered by divorce. How many will be given the chance to consider the ingredients of a marriage that lasts?

Children need an opportunity to discuss these topics, and schools can give it to them.

There is a final way to help the children of divorce, and that is by giving some thought to just how complicated their struggles can be.

Dr. Schneider has explored it with keen sensitivity: "The loss involved with the process of divorce parallels the loss involved with death," she has written.[7] Those stages are familiar to anyone who has read Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's On Death and Dying. Dr. Schneider points out that

> Children often go through stages of denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and, finally, some acceptance. Unlike death, however, divorce lacks finality. Children usually maintain contact with both parents; however, homelife is never what it once was.[8]

When someone dies, Dr. Schneider observed, they go away and stay away and the child is forced to adjust to that reality. But in divorce, parents go on living separate lives and making choices--choices that the children must learn to deal with.

Often children must adapt to a decline in the standard of living. Maybe the family moves from a house to an apartment. Maybe Mother takes her first job. Money becomes an issue for the children as well as the parents, because everyone gets half of what they got before, she noted.

Later, children may have to adjust to remarriage and the blended family. If both parents marry spouses who have children of their own, the child must blend in with not just one, but two new families. "Kids often get confused just trying to figure out what their relationship to all this new family is," she told me. And it's not always so easy to get along with those new relatives. "If you can remember how difficult sibling rivalry was, imagine the difficulties of *step*-sibling rivalry!" she said.

Even after children adjust to their blended families, the problems of divorce persist, Dr. Schneider noted. It's especially rough when the parents dislike each other. Holidays and milestones can become like tug of wars, with the child being pulled both ways.

Who does he see at Christmas? How does he handle spring vacation? Or graduation? Or even his wedding?

These are the dilemmas the children of divorce must handle. As parents, as educators, as citizens, we must confront these problems and try to help.

Notes

[1] Aric Press, Peggy Clausen, William Burger, Pamela Abramson, John McCormick and Sandra Cavazos, "Divorce American Style," Newsweek, 10 January 1983, p. 42.

[2] Mary Sonnenshein-Schneider and Kay L. Baird, "Group Counseling Children of Divorce in the Elementary Schools: Understanding Process and Technique," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 59 (October 1980): 89.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., p. 88.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., p. 91.

[8] Ibid.

Senator **Denton**. That hearing will focus on the broken family's effect on women and men. We are adjourned.

[Whereupon at 1:05 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned to reconvene at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 24, 1983.]

BROKEN FAMILIES

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1983

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:45 a.m., in room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Jeremiah Denton (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senator Denton.

Senator DENTON. Good morning. Welcome. This hearing of the Subcommittee on Family and Human Services will come to order.

Before I make my opening statement, I would like to welcome from the State of New York, Congressman Biaggi. If you are pressed for time, Congressman, I can let you go ahead before I make my opening statement.

Mr. BIAGGI. I defer to you, Senator.

Senator DENTON. All right, sir.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR DENTON

We continue today with the second in a series of oversight hearings on a complex, sensitive, and what many consider devastating social crisis: the breakdown of the family unit in the United States. On Tuesday our hearing focused on the effects of family breakdown on children. Today our hearing is entitled "Broken Family: Effects on Women and Men." In June we will continue on with two hearings investigating causes and possible solutions to this generation's epidemic of broken families.

At no previous time in this Nation's history have the rates of family dissolution been as high.

One out of every two marriages now ends in divorce. According to one witness we heard on Tuesday, single-parent families are growing at 20 times the rate of 2-parent families. Such a major demographic change cannot leave our society unscarred. Indeed, it cannot leave the men, women, and children involved unscarred.

Multiple studies show major overall differences in the psychological and physical well-being of those who are married compared to those who are divorced or separated. Divorced and separated persons are more frequently admitted to psychiatric facilities than those in any other category of individual. Divorced, widowed, and separated persons have higher rates of illness and disability. For example, divorced white males under the age of 70 are twice as likely to die from heart disease, twice as likely to die from lung cancer, and seven times as likely to die from cirrhosis of the liver. Moreover, these divorced men are five times more likely to commit suicide, and they have six times as many fatal automobile accidents.

I must clarify again for those here today how the subcommittee has chosen to define the term "broken family." By that term is meant more than the divorced family. It means parents who live apart, parents who never marry, and particularly mothers who must raise their children with little or no assistance from a husband.

Broken family means trauma both during and after the breakdown, trauma which may persist for each of the parents and the child or children extending beyond the immediate family to relatives, friends, and associates.

The policies which our Federal Government establishes by law, by regulation, or by leadership play a major role in promoting either family cohesion or family disintegration. Some of these policies are established by this particular subcommittee. For example, the Child Abuse Prevention and Adoption Reform Act on which we will soon begin a series of hearings prior to its reauthorization bears significantly on what might be in some cases an effect of family breakdown. The not unrelated problem of adolescent pregnancy is addressed directly by two programs under the subcommittee's jurisdiction: Title X of the Public Health Services Act, otherwise known as Federal family planning; and the Adolescent Family Life Act, which Congress enacted less than 2 years ago as an alternative approach to the problem of adolescent pregnancy. Both of these programs can alter the attitudes, values, and lifestyles adopted by our young people, thus affecting the probability of success of their subsequent marriages.

The goals of these hearings are several: by examining the effects of family breakdown, perhaps we will be able to identify causes in the hope that some of the causes can be eliminated or at least alleviated so as to preserve intact families which might otherwise have broken up. We hope to identify premarital activities and dispositions which might be adjusted so as to prevent the contracting of marriages foredoomed to failure by virtue of those activities or dispositions.

Furthermore, we may be able to establish which activities or dispositions within marriage tend either to keep marriages together or to break them needlessly apart. I also believe that we can determine means of improving the well-being of the victims of family breakdown, particularly of divorced women with inadequate financial support and of troubled children.

Although 35 million individuals now live in a household headed by a single man or woman, witnesses at our first hearing gave us good reason to believe that the traditional family is still the standard, still the basic social unit, and still the ultimate goal of most unmarried individuals.

The majority of marriages do not end in divorce or separation. Indeed, according to a recent Gallup survey discussed at our earlier hearing by Mr. Gallup, 79 percent of all Americans are highly satisfied with their family lives. A similar survey shows that two-thirds of all families are very happy with their marriages, and only 3 percent are not too happy.

According to another Gallup survey, 8 out of every 10 Americans rank their family life as more important than their personal satisfaction or income. Statistics released last week by the National Center for Health Statistics are likewise reason for optimism. They show that in 1982, for the first time in 20 years, the number of divorces in the United States dropped. Although some would say that the family unit has degenerated in the United States to a point of no return, I think not. I hope not.

But in some measure, as I said at Tuesday's hearing, Government policy and the tone of our Nation's leadership will influence either the revitalization or the further weakening of our society. We in Congress must be truly committed to our constitutional mandate to promote the general welfare. I can think of no way of doing that better than to enhance the solidarity of our basic social unit. We cannot stand passively by being silent witness to the suffering of our Nation's families.

This subcommittee has already been presented with a large body of evidence on the serious effects of divorce, separation, and single parenthood on children. We will now turn to an examination of the evidence of the effects of divorce on adults.

And our first witness, Mr. Bruce Chapman, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau, will give an overview of marital and divorce trends in the United States, discussing in particular the economic implications of those trends.

Our other panels will then discuss economic, psychological, and other effects of marital breakdown on women and men.

One expert, Dr. Harriet McAdoo, will focus on the problems of the black family.

Before we proceed with the witnesses, I would like to submit for the record a statement by Senator Grassley, who regrets that he is unable to join us today.

[Material referred to follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR GRASSLEY

Senator GRASSLEY. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the time that you have expended in studying the effects of divorce on children, former marriage partners, and society in general. The record that is being formed as a result of these two hearings is a valuable tool that will aid all of us in examining the causes of marital dissolution; we must know the causes and effects of divorce before we can investigate means to bolster and revitalize the family.

There can be no doubt that the institution of marriage is the foundation of the familial and social structure of our Nation and, as such, continues to be of vital interest to all of us. We cannot blind ourselves to the fact that the concept of the sanctity of a marriage as being practically indestructable has been greatly eroded in the last few decades. Given these factors it is appropriate to study the causes and effects of what amounts to a disturbing divorce rate.

It is a pleasure to greet the distinguished and capable Congressman from New York, Mario Biaggi. Congressman Biaggi's hearing last Congress, "Grandparents: The Other Victims of Marital Dissolution," was called to examine the rights of grandparents to preserve their own relationship with grandchildren despite divorce, separation, and other breakdowns in the family. It is particularly appropriate that he be included at this hearing to explain the text of the resolution that he has offered in the House that calls for a Uniform Grandparent Visitation Act that would recognize the vital role that grandparents potentially play in the lives of children.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I note your hard work in this area and offer my assistance to you in your efforts to bolster the family unit.

Senator DENTON. I will ask Congressman Biaggi from the State of New York to make his statement, which, as I understand it, deals briefly with the issue of grandparents visitation.

Welcome, Congressman Biaggi.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARIO BIAGGI, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK, ACCOMPANIED BY CAROL M. STATUTO

Mr. BIAGGI. Thank you very much, Senator.

I am accompanied today by Dr. Carol Statuto, who is a congressional science fellow of the Society for the Research of Child Development.

I want to commend you for having these hearings on the broken family, and thank you for the opportunity to testify about the often forgotten "hidden dimension" other victims of divorce; namely, grandparents. We must take note of the fact that approximately 70 percent of all older Americans are grandparents; that grandparents play a vital role in millions of American families, and that an estimated 1 million children each year experience the divorce of their parents.

Such children may have little or no further contact with their grandparents, even though research shows that grandparents can help grandchildren in times of stress like divorce. Grandparents can provide continuity of care that divorce threatens to break up.

Grandparents can offer the love that children might fear is destroyed by the divorce situation. I am here today to advocate that a Uniform Grandparent Visitation Act be adopted by all States to protect the love that exists between grandparents and grandchildren.

House Concurrent Resolution 45 is a direct outgrowth of a hearing I conducted as chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Services of the House Select Aging Committee to examine what rights, if any, grandparents have to preserve an important relationship with their grandchildren following marital dissolution.

We learned sadly enough that grandparents have no legal rights to maintain contact with their grandchildren following a divorce. However, in 42 States grandparents, depending on their circumstances, have a permissive right to petition the court for visitation privileges. Unfortunately, these 42 so-called grandparents' rights visitation statutes place limitations on grandparents' petitions that are so restrictive as to prohibit substantial numbers of grandparents from invoking the privilege of petition.

For example, some States view death of a parent as the only circumstance that will allow grandparents the privilege of petitioning the court for access to their grandchildren. One State specifies that the child must be placed in a foster home before grandparents can petition for continued access to their grandchildren.

Only four States will hear petitions from grandparents whose grandchildren have been adopted by a stepparent. On the other hand, seven States place no limitations, but simply state that any person interested in the welfare of the child may petition for visitation privileges.

This diversity of State statutes frustrates the interest of grandparents and grandchildren alike in two important ways: one, not all grandparents in the same circumstances have the same right to petition the court; and, two, many grandparents who have been granted visitation privileges in one State find that these privileges are not recognized by a sister State.

In response to these problems, I introduced House Concurrent Resolution 45, the Uniform Grandparent Visitation Act. This resolution has 55 cosponsors, and on March 9 unanimously passed the Subcommittee on Select Education. Today the full Committee on Education and Labor will mark up the resolution.

I believe that this resolution calling upon the National Conference of Commissioners and Uniform State Laws to develop a model State act providing grandparents with the uniform right to petition and to be heard with respect to maintaining access to their grandchildren is a sensible and effective approach to assist States in protecting the familial interest that State law seek to serve.

By encouraging all States to adopt the Uniform Grandparent Visitation Act, interstate recognition of awarded visitation rights would be insured. The resolution also encourages the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect to develop and disseminate model guidelines that would recognize that the children's best interest can often be served by allowing grandparents to maintain continued contact.

In closing, let me say that I believe that this resolution is not an overly intrusive Federal measure, but a legitimate congressional remedy that calls upon States to adopt a uniform approach to a problem that 42 States already recognize, and one that has led to the establishment of four national grandparents-grandchildren groups.

As a grandfather of six, it is important to recognize the vital role that grandparents can play in the lives of children and even more important to acknowledge children's rights to maintain contact with grandparents.

Mr. Chairman, when a child is born, a grandparent is created. That relationship does not terminate simply because there is a dissolution of marriage or death. And I believe fundamentally that the grandparent and the child both have rights to a continued relationship unless it is found not to be in the best interests of the child.

But that is a criteria and standard that should be established and in which I strongly concur. But the preservation of that relationship is essential in the development and growth in the traditional manner of American life.

Senator DENTON. Well, thank you, Congressman. I might say that I have read extensively, perhaps not as extensively as you because you are involved in that particular context of the divorce, postdivorce situation, but for the legal profession, this area has become a jungle of ad hoc, bandaid type rulings for the judges to decide what kind of custody, what kind of sharing of that child will take place.

And it seems that in too many cases these parents themselves who have had a rather light commitment to the way they entered the marriage care less about that child than the grandparents do. And there seems to develop contestual attitudes for the sake of contention over that privilege of being with that child. In other words, more than love is in some cases involved with that desire.

The grandparent has nothing but love and responsibility toward that child, as a rule. I am interested with trying to help you, if I can in any way, with your effort, because as was pointed out yesterday by one of the witnesses, the parent, the mother, the father fight over the child. And sometimes, as you have read in some of these weird solutions, the child goes to school in Denver for a few weeks and then to school a few more weeks in Tampa, so the parents can have the child for the right amount of time. That sort of thing puts it in the context of everybody's interests but the poor little child's, in some cases, being considered. So I support where you are coming from. I have already observed and admired the performance of grandparents as Foster Grandparents in programs over which I have jurisdiction, and in the many volunteer programs with which you must be familiar, in which elderly persons perform altruistic and useful tasks for this Nation's society.

So, thank you very much for your appearance here this morning, and best of luck to you.

Mr. BIAGGI. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I am delighted that I was in a position to listen to your testimony this morning because there is one very salient factor that stood out among the rest of your important statement. And that is that divorced are burdened with a number of factors: shorter life, greater incidence of lung cancer, and a whole host of liabilities that develop as a result of divorce.

And it might well be to the advantage of our society that those facts be advertised. This is the first time I heard them—and you can be assured I will be using them.

Senator DENTON. It is hard to advertise when only a couple of members of the press, whom I salute, are interested in what many caring people and knowing people regard as a greater threat to the well-being and even survival of this Nation than, say, the Soviets. I happen to be among those. I am conservative, supposedly hawkish, and so forth; however, I regard this problem as more poisonous than our security threat.

And unless there is some press interest in this particular area, we will never advertise the identities of the problems, the causes, or any of the solutions or partial solutions. Indeed, it seems at times as if some of the media elite would not only be disinterested in this subject, but harmful in their effect, as shown by the mindsets and lifestyles which they possess relative to the rest of the United States, as revealed by the Lichter-Rothman polls.

That presents a separate problem, the solution to which I have no particular ideas; only sort of a wringing of the hands.

But thank you for your interest, and thank you for bringing along your very well qualified expert.

Mr. BIAGGI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DENTON. As mentioned, our first witness is a real authority on demographics and this subject area is in his overview, Mr. Bruce Chapman, the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau. Would you please step forward and take a seat, Mr. Chapman.

STATEMENT OF BRUCE CHAPMAN, DIRECTOR, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, ACCOMPANIED BY JAMES WEED, CHIEF, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY STATISTICS BRANCH, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU; AND GORDON GREEN, ASSISTANT CHIEF, POPULATION DIVISION

Mr. CHAPMAN. Thank you. Good morning, Senator Denton, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DENTON. Good morning, Mr. Chapman.

Mr. CHAPMAN. It is a pleasure to be here, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Census Bureau to your Senate Subcommittee on the Family and Human Services on the status of families in the United States. And I am submitting with your permission a formal copy of the report that we are making to you for the record. It is certainly too long for us to read this morning, but I think it will be of interest to you and to your committee.

Senator DENTON. Without objection, it shall be entered as part of this record.

Mr. CHAPMAN. I would also like to introduce Mr. Gordon Green, who is the Assistant Chief of our Population Division and one of our experts on the subject of poverty in America; and also on my right, Mr. James Weed who is the Chief of our Marriage and Family Statistics Branch at the Census Bureau.

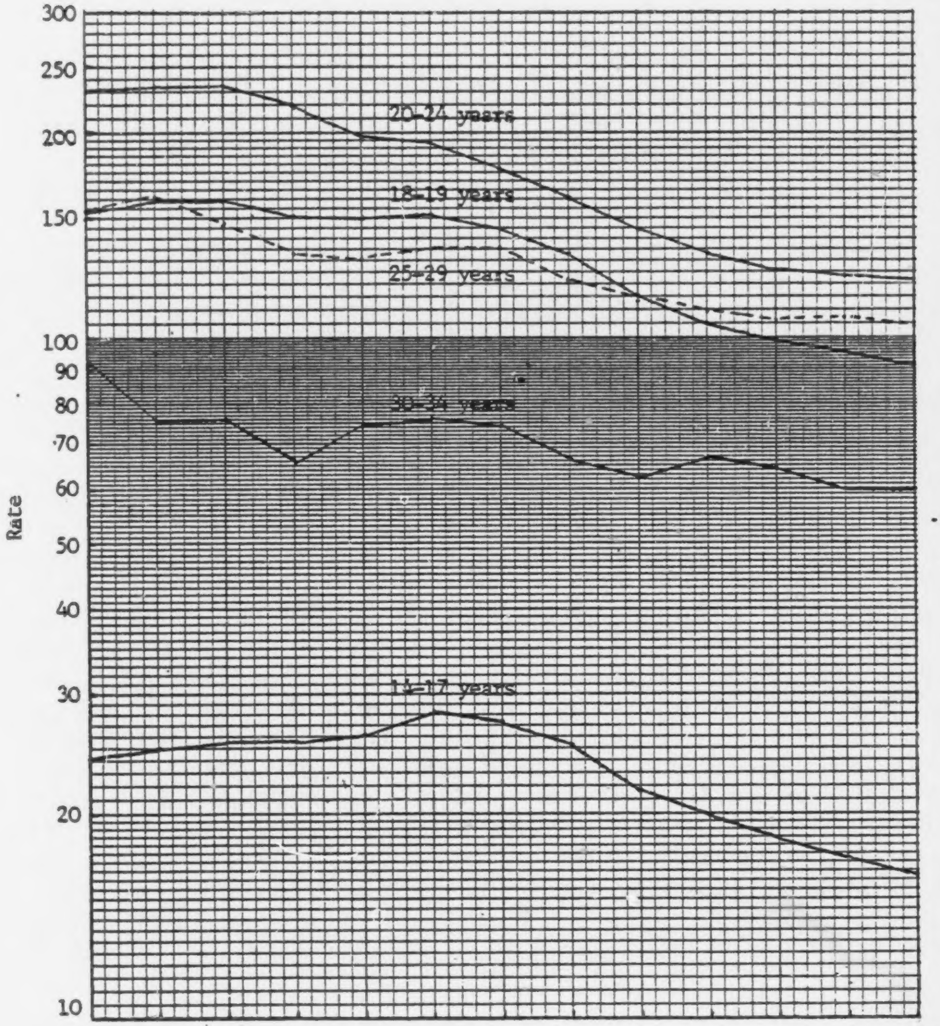
Senator DENTON. Good morning, gentlemen. Welcome.

Mr. CHAPMAN. What I would like to do now is to go through some graphs for the committee that will examine the consequences of the fast changing patterns of family composition in this country. In summary what they say is that the so-called social issues are meeting the economic issues at this time in our history.

[The following material was submitted to the record:]

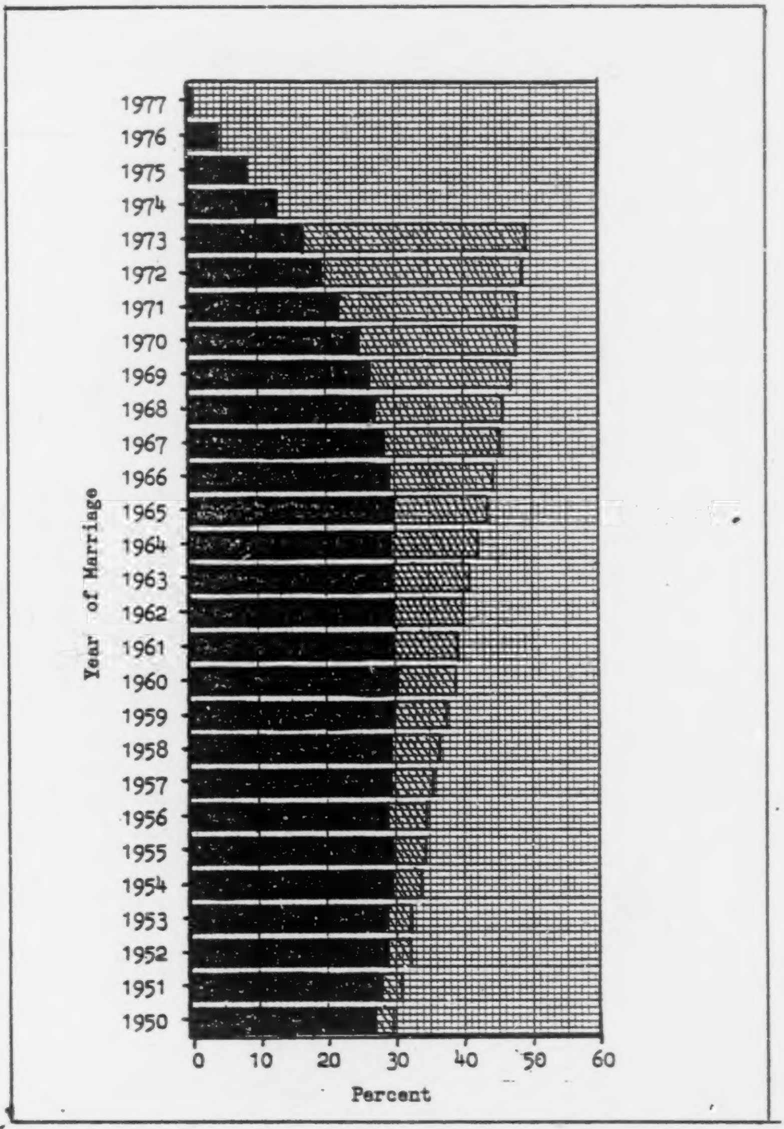
Figure 1. Rate of First Marriage for Never-Married Women 14 to 34 Years Old, by Age: Marriage Registration Area, 1967-79

(Based on sample data. Rates per 1,000 population in specified age group. Plotted on semi-logarithmic scale)



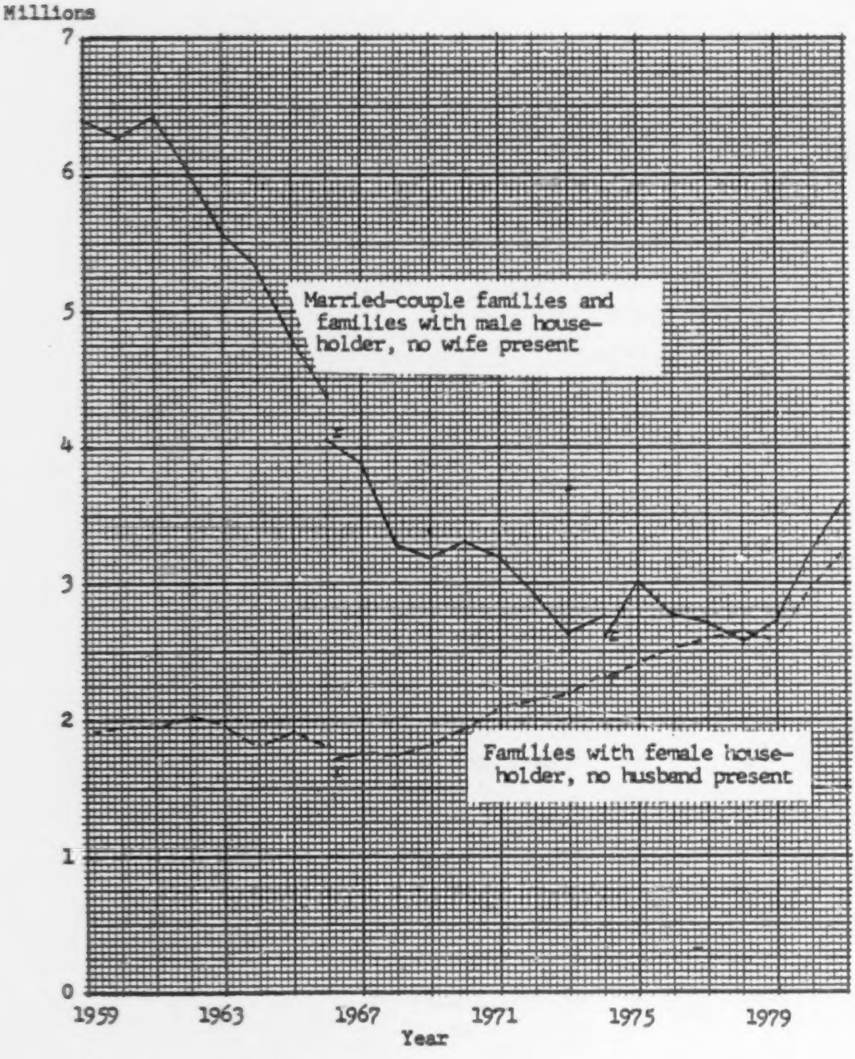
SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics. Advance Report of Final Marriage Statistics. Monthly Vital Statistics Report, various years.

Figure 2. Cumulative percent of cohort marriages ended by divorce through 1977 (solid bar) and percent of cohort marriages projected to end in divorce (cross-hatched bar), by year of marriage.



SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics. National Estimates of Marriage Dissolution and Survivorship, by James A. Weed. Vital and Health Statistics, Series 3, No. 19 (Nov. 1980).

Figure 3. Families Below the Poverty Level, by Type of Family: 1959 to 1980



r/ Based on revised methodology.

SOURCE: Bureau of the Census. Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1980. Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 127 (August 1981), Table 18, pp. 29-31.

Mr. CHAPMAN. One indication is the rising rate of marital dissolutions, as shown on this chart which combines divorced and separated women as a percent of ever married women aged 25 to 44. There is a very steep rise in divorced and separated persons. It is distinguished by a strong difference between the races, which is illustrated in this chart.

The change from 1960 to 1980 in dissolutions—that is to say, women divorced or separated—among the whites rose from 5 percent to 14 percent in 20 years. Among blacks it rose from 19 percent to 37 percent.

As you have commented in your own opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, we see that if present rates persist, roughly half of all marriages will end in divorce.

Senator DENTON. For your information, Mr. Chapman, to support your point, I think it was Mr. Gallup yesterday in extrapolating—it might have been Professor Etzioni—in extrapolating from the data based on the acceleration of family breakdowns beginning in about 1965, found that in the year 2008 there will be no families left in the United States.

Mr. CHAPMAN. Well, I would be very careful as a statistician about that. But——

Senator DENTON. You can do anything with numbers. But that was one amazing thing he did.

Mr. CHAPMAN. We also know that the remarriage rate, or the rate at which people who have been divorced remarry, went down in the past decade by 30 percent for divorced women aged 25 to 44 years.

And in the next chart we will look at another aspect of the situation, which is the number of births out of wedlock. Here again the trend is contributing to the increase in fatherless families. The rate of increase among whites went from 2 percent of births out of wedlock to 9 percent in 1979. And the rate among blacks rose from 22 percent to 55 percent in 1979, which means that more than one out of two black children in this country is being born out of wedlock.

I should emphasize that this chart shows the proportion of births out of wedlock. It is not a numerical trend, as such, because what it represents is an increase in the total percentage—rather than total numbers—of births out of wedlock. The total number of births has been declining in this country in terms of the fertility rate.

Now, we also know about out of wedlock births, that 4 out of 10 such births are to teenagers. Consequences of these are many. Some speculation, or I should say informed study, by Dr. Marvin Wolfgang of the University of Pennsylvania suggests that out of wedlock births will be an influence on the crime rate.

In any event, the combination of all the factors I have mentioned, the divorce and separation, and the out of wedlock births combine to create a growth in families maintained by women with no husband present.

Senator DENTON. If I may interject one more time: As cochairman of the Alabama Commission on Children and the Family, I find that not only was there a relationship in that State between the crime rate and illegitimate births, but also a distinct relationship between that rate and child abuse.

Mr. CHAPMAN. Going on, Mr. Chairman, if I may, to the question of families maintained by women with no husband present and the economic circumstances of those individuals, we see here first a sharp increase in those single parent families maintained by women up from 9 percent to 12 percent in the past decade for whites, and from 28 percent to 40 percent for blacks.

Senator DENTON. May I study that just a moment?

Mr. CHAPMAN. Sure.

Senator DENTON. From 1960 to 1970 there were no increases in the percentage of white families maintained by women with no husband present. Then in the next decade a 33.3-percent increase; is that correct?

Mr. CHAPMAN. That is correct.

Senator DENTON. And almost doubling over 20 years in the case of the black race. Thank you.

Mr. CHAPMAN. We know about raising children, that the cost of raising children for any family is very steep, and is steeply increasing. Just to mention one study that the Bureau of Labor Statistics conducted recently showed that 67 percent more income is needed by a family to raise two children than to raise none and maintain the same standard of living.

Well, you can see with those kinds of odds, it is especially hard for a single female parent to maintain a standard of living with children that she is responsible for. But far from having that income, we see that only 35 percent of single parent families maintained by women get child support from the father.

In contrast and perhaps partly as a result some 50 percent of single parent families maintained by women get some form of public assistance.

And in this next chart you see that the percent of families receiving transfer payments by sex in 1980 illustrates the difference between those families that are maintained by women and those by men. Only 2 percent of the males receive aid to families with dependent children, which is a cash transfer, as compared to 25 percent of the females. Only 5 percent of the males get food stamps, which is an in kind transfer, or noncash transfer as compared to 30 percent of the females.

And so it goes among the different categories of public assistance. So the high rate of female family householder participation is leading to higher expenditures for poverty programs as the numbers of families maintained by women increases.

And I might mention that this phenomenon operates somewhat outside of other economic conditions generally, so that there is a social dynamic taking place here; and it does have economic consequences, both for the family and for the society, and the Government.

Next I would like to look at the murky but very important subject of the measurement of poverty in our country. The size of the official poverty population that you see down below in gold or in yellow has increased substantially since the seventies. It was up to 29.3 million persons in 1980, and we know in 1981 it went up again to 31.8 million, a rise of about a little over 6 million in 10 years.

Senator DENTON. May I make a suggestion, Mr. Chapman. So that the audience can see these very illustrative charts, we could still see them if you were to turn that about 20 degrees more, and then it you would get on the other side so that you would not block it. That is a little far for us to be able to see it, if you could turn it back a little bit. OK. Thank you.

That did not help much out there. You all can see it over here, but they cannot, I am sure.

Mr. **Chapman**. Get on the other side.

Senator **Denton**. I tell you what, while he is talking about the charts, you might turn it so that they on my left can see it or at least some portion of it.

Mr. **Chapman**. We will put these charts over on the side when we are through if people want to look at them later in the day, Mr. Chairman, if that is all right.

As I mentioned, there has been an increase, then, in the persons officially listed below the poverty level, and yet this increase during the seventies occurred at the very time we were spending more and more money on poverty through transfer programs of the Federal Government.

If you look up above you see that the amount of money spent in 1965 was $15.7 billion. By 1980 it had grown to $61.3 billion.

The second interesting fact about those figures, however, is the nature of the kinds of transfers that took place. In the 1960's and into the middle of the past decade, the heavy majority of those transfers came in the form of cash transfers such as aid to families with dependent children, shown in the green.

In fact, in 1965, the proportion of those transfers compared to noncash transfers was two out of three. However, the Government decided in the seventies that it was wiser to give money in noncash transfers where one would know how the money was going to be spent than in cash transfers.

And so not only the number of dollars spent, but the proportion rose steeply until in 1980 $2 out of $3 dollars spent was in noncash transfers such as food stamps, public housing, and so forth. And yet for purposes of official measurement of poverty, we do not count the noncash transfers. We continue to count only the cash transfers, and it is on that basis that the determination is made of how many people are in poverty officially in this country. Of course, that has great consequence as to how people see the problem.

Senator **Denton**. This is an ignorant question, but in computing eligibility for various poverty programs, is the noncash assistance, such as public housing, included in the eligibility criteria as cash?

Mr. **Chapman**. Recently we did a report at the Census Bureau which showed what would be the result of including in kind, noncash transfers on the measurement of poverty in the country. And what it showed was that measuring the value of those benefits at their cash value, market value would reduce the poverty level as of 1979 from 11.1 percent to 6.4 percent.

There are other evaluations which would have reduced it somewhat less. But what it suggests is the concept of poverty measurement may need to be reconsidered since it does not count the chief source of income for many of the poor, namely, noncash benefits.

By the same token, it seems to me that we need to take a look at the role of family stability if we want to understand the changing composition of the poverty population itself. We have seen a huge growth in the female maintained families, and that has changed the composition of the poverty population itself.

This next chart shows the percent of families in poverty which are maintained by women. And here again the increase has been steep, from 24 percent of all families in poverty in 1960 to 48 percent of all families in poverty in 1980. In fact, the number of full-time workers in poverty has become very low in this country, and many of those are there in the official sense largely as a consequence of large family size, since our poverty standard if higher for larger families.

And so there are very few full-time workers in poverty. If it were not in fact for the large increase in the single parent families in recent years, poverty would be a much smaller problem than it is in this country.

How much difference family composition makes in the poverty problem is shown in this next chart. Now, this again is based on official poverty figures. But you see at the top that if we were to keep the same profile of family composition in 1980 that existed in 1970—in other words, if we had been able to stop the increase in divorce and separation and leave everything else constant, we would have had a reduction of the poverty rate. The poverty rate would have gone from 8 percent to 5.9 percent among whites, and among blacks, it would have gone from 28.9 percent in 1980 to 19.9 percent in 1980, adjusting for family composition changes since 1970.

As a matter of fact, if we were to look at intact families, we would see that median family income was not completely stagment during the 1970's. There was, in fact, real progress economically for intact families and for other kinds of families, but the increase in the number of single parent families tended to be a drag upon the total income, or median family income of the country as a whole.

Senator **Denton**. I want to make sure I am understanding it, though. In 1980, 8 percent down to 5.9 percent. If you adjust for changes in family composition, that does not appear to be an extremely big drop by virtue of adjustment.

Mr. **Chapman**. It is a pretty big drop in the proportion of that population.

Senator **Denton**. You have 25 percent, almost.

Mr. **Chapman**. Yes. And it is a much sharper drop, of course, for blacks.

Senator **Denton**. Well, let us see; what is it percentagewise, though?

Mr. **Chapman**. 28.9 percent to——

Senator **Denton**. Yes, but I mean, what is 20 over 38? It is about a third again almost; fairly similar to the other one, I think, in percentage of drop. OK. Thank you, sir. Go ahead.

Mr. **Chapman**. That is our presentation, Mr. Chairman. In summary, poverty is increasingly a function in this society of family composition. And the data that we have presented, I think, also raise the question of the future of families, and particularly the future of children in our society and how their interests are handled wisely.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Chapman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BRUCE CHAPMAN, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

In the last two decades it has become increasingly common for both husbands and wives to be employed outside the home. Wives typically work before bearing children, and increasing numbers also continue to work during and after their pregnancies. Their work may be prompted by their own emerging career interests as a result of increased education, or by rising wages and expanding job opportunities for women, as they seek to maintain or increase the family's standard of living in the face of inflation or economic uncertainty. During the last 20 years more and more couples have also been ending their marriages in divorce, with each person maintaining a separate household. Divorced women who maintain their own households are very likely to work outside the home. Even if they work, their household income is usually considerably reduced from the level that they experienced as married women, and consequently many divorced women may qualify for public benefits designed to assist the needy.

These recent trends have given rise to frequent expressions of concern for the demise of the family as the fundamental institution in American society. Almost as frequently, one may hear counterclaims expressing satisfaction with certain social changes that may be producing more equitable or more enlightened family relationships. It is very difficult to weigh the pros and cons of all the changes taking place in society, but for a variety of policy and program reasons, both public and private, the effort to qualitatively evaluate the impact of change continues to be made. An important element of this enterprise is the gathering and analysis of relevant data regarding as many facets of family life as possible. The topics selected for discussion are intended to further this effort.

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

In the last ten to twenty years, dramatic changes have taken place in the specific kinds of social behavior that demographically contribute to the process of family formation. Fertility has declined to historically low levels. During the mid-1970's, the fertility of American women was at a rate that would result in about 1.8 children by the end of their childbearing years, a level approximately one-half that recorded during the peak of the baby boom in the 1950's. In addition, marriage rates have fallen, while out-of-wedlock births and divorce have risen.[1] These trends have produced significant changes in family structure. The following summarizes recent changes in marriage, divorce, and family structure, as a basis for the discussion of the changing status of families.

Marriage Trends and Differentials

In 1979 there were more marriages performed in the United States (2,331,337) than in any previous year. In fact, the 1979 total exceeded for the first time the prior all-time record of 2,291,045 marriages performed in 1946 at the close of World War II. The national marriage totals for 1980, 1981, and 1982 were even higher, provisionally estimated at 2,413,000, 2,438,000, and 2,495,000, respectively.

Although the United States is now experiencing record numbers of marriages, this does not necessarily mean that Americans are any more inclined to be the "marrying kind" today than they have been in the past, despite suggestions along these lines in the press. The marriage total may very well be at record levels, but increasing proportions of these marriages are remarriages for the brides or grooms or both, as a result of high divorce rates. According to the latest data published by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) for the Marriage Registration Area[2] (MRA), only about 68 percent of the brides in the MRA in 1979 were marrying for the first time as compared with 77 percent in 1969. In other words, the national marriage total is now larger than it would be if the divorce rate were lower and there were fewer remarriages. In addition, the national marriage total for 1979 probably would have been larger by more than a half million marriages if the unmarried population in 1979 had married at the same rates (that is, with the same propensity) that occurred in 1969.

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[1] Although some recent statistics suggest that the divorce rate may have dipped, it remains to be seen whether this is the beginning of a new trend.

Indeed, the marriage rate for 1979 was lower than the rate for any other year since 1940. During the last four decades, the highest rate was recorded in the very atypical year of 1946: 118.1 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women 15 years and over. In the last 20 years the highest rate occurred in 1969. Since that time the rate declined every year, dropping by 20 percent from 80.0 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women in 1969 to 63.6 in 1979, the most recent year for which such rates are available from NCHS.

Figures published for the MRA demonstrate the changes that have occurred over the last decade in the propensity to marry among certain subgroups of the population. Most striking are the declines in first-marriage rates for young men and women. Specifically, the first-marriage rate for women aged 18 and 19 declined 43 percent between 1969 and 1979. In the same 10-year period the rate for women aged 20 to 24 years declined 48 percent and the rate for women 25 to 29 years declined 29 percent (Figure 1). First-marriage rates for men in these same three age groups declined 44 percent, 47 percent, and 39 percent, respectively, between 1969 and 1979.

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[2] In 1979 the Marriage Registration Area included 42 states plus the District of Columbia. Each of these reporting areas provides copies of marriage certificates to NCHS annually.

The effect of these recently declining marriage rates can be seen in the percent of the population in various age groups that have never been married. Table 1 shows for women the percent never married in 1960, 1970, and 1981. In the two periods of 1960-70 and 1970-81, similar increases occurred in the percent never married for women aged 18 and 19 years. However, for the age group 25 to 29 years, the percent never married did not change between 1960 and 1970, and then more than doubled between 1970 and 1981. In 1960, 1 out of 10 women aged 25 to 29 years had never been married; today that figure is 1 out of 5.

In general, Black women have significantly higher proportions never married than do White women. For example, in 1981 the proportion of Black women aged 30 to 34 years who had never married was more than double the corresponding proportion for White women. Indeed, the differential between White and Black women seems to be increasing in most age groups shown in Table 1.

Closely related to this postponement or foregoing of marriage is the phenomenon of nonmarital fertility. In general, the longer a woman remains single during her fecund years, the greater is the probability of her ever having an out-of-wedlock birth. Of the 3.5 million children born in 1979, 17 percent (approximately 600,000) were born to unmarried women, up from 11 percent (or 400,000) in 1970. Among White children the proportion increased from 6 percent born out-of-wedlock in 1970 to 9 percent in 1979, while among Black children the proportion increased from 38 percent in 1970 to 55 percent in 1979. Four out of every ten out-of-wedlock births in 1979 were to teenage women, a group which is unlikely to have adequate incomes or job prospects. The increase in out-of-wedlock births, from 400,000 in

1970 to 600,000 in 1979, is not the result of an increased rate of childbearing among unmarried women, but rather, an increase in the number of unmarried women who could potentially have an out-of-wedlock birth.

Divorce Trends and Differentials

The increase in the divorce rate over the last 15 years is probably more widely known than the decline in marriage. Between 1965 and 1979 the divorce rate increased by 115 percent, from 10.6 per 1,000 married women aged 15 and over to 22.8 per 1,000. A rate of 22.8 per 1,000 may appear to be not particularly large, but when the annual rate is "compounded" over time, the impact of today's period (annual) divorce rates can be most striking. Figure 2 demonstrates the rising tide of divorce from the perspective of annual marriage cohorts (that is, all marriages performed in a given year) from 1950 to 1977. For example, by the end of 1977, when the 1.5 million marriages in the cohort of 1952 would have celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary, fully 29 percent of the couples in the cohort had dissolved their marriages by divorce.

Divorce data from vital statistics indicate that more recent marriage cohorts have fared no better, and most likely will end up faring worse than earlier cohorts. Of the marriages performed in 1957, about 29 percent had ended in divorce by 1977, their would-be 20th anniversary. By 1977, divorce had disrupted about 30 percent of the 1962 cohort and 28 percent of the 1967 cohort, before their 15th and 10th anniversaries, respectively. Thus almost equal proportions--roughly 3 out of 10--had ended in divorce by 1977 for each of these cohorts. That is, each succeeding cohort had reached the 3-out-of-10 proportion at a shorter duration of marriage.

The final story on the divorce experience of these cohorts will not be known for many years. But if the current pattern of divorce rates should continue into the future, another 3 percent of the 1952 cohort would experience divorce, for a total of 32 percent. The cohorts of 1957, 1962, and 1967 would have, respectively, another 6, 10, and 17 percent of their marriages ended by divorce. If the current pattern of duration-specific divorce rates continues in the future, it is possible that half of more recent annual marriage cohorts could end in divorce.

Another index of marital disruption is the divorce ratio, which relates the number of currently divorced persons to the number of currently married persons (with spouse present). Table 2 shows differentials in the divorce ratio by sex, race, and Spanish origin for selected points of time in the last two decades. For example, among Black women in 1981, there were 289 who were divorced for every 1,000 who were married with husband present. The divorce ratio for Black women was more than double the ratio for White women. Moreover, the race differential has widened for both sexes over the last 20 years.[3/]

A majority of couples that experience marital disruption go on to terminate their marriage in a legal divorce. In some cases, however, the couple may not seek an immediate divorce, but choose instead to remain separated for an indefinite period. Over the last decade there has been a dramatic increase in the percent of ever-married women aged 25 to 44 who are divorced or separated. Specifically, for White women the percent divorced or separated increased only from 5 to 7 percent between 1960 and

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[3/] The divorce ratio is affected by changes in remarriage as well as in divorce, because the population of divorced persons increases as couples divorce and declines as persons remarry. Hence, race differences in the divorce ratio will also reflect race differentials in remarriage.

1970, and then doubled to 15 percent in 1981 (4 percent were separated and 11 percent were divorced). The level of divorce and separation is much higher for Black women, for whom the percentage increased from 19 percent in 1960 to 25 percent in 1970, and 39 percent in 1981 (21 percent were separated and 18 percent were divorced).

Changes in Family Structure

During the period from 1970 to 1981 the number of families[4] in the United States increased by 17 percent, rising from 51.6 million to 60.3 million (Table 3). Married-couple families accounted for a little more than half of the 8.7 million increase in families, although the number of married-couple families with own children under 18 years of age actually declined by 0.6 million. This change reflects the low levels of fertility occurring in the 1970's. Compared with married-couple families, proportionally larger gains occurred for families maintained by a man or woman with no spouse present, and even larger gains were experienced by single-parent families (generally reflecting high levels of separation and divorce).[4]

As a result of such trends in family composition, married-couple families comprised 82 percent of all families in 1981 (compared to 87 percent in 1970), while married-couple families with own children comprised only 41 percent (vs. 50 percent in 1970). Meanwhile, single-parent families maintained by a woman comprised about 9 percent of families in 1981, compared to 6 percent in 1970.

Of the three race/ethnic groups shown in Table 3, only the families with a householder of Spanish origin experienced an increase between 1970 and 1981 in the number of married-couple families with own children. In 1981 more than half of all families of Spanish origin were married couples with own children. Such families comprised about 31 percent of all Black families and 42 percent of all White families. In 1981, families maintained by a female householder with no husband present comprised 1 out of 10 White families, 4 out of 10 Black families, and 2 out of 10 families of Spanish origin.

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[4] A family is a group of two or more persons (one of whom maintains the household, i.e., is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together. Single parent families have children present.

Among White families there was considerable increase between 1970 and 1981 in the percent of families with own children maintained by a man with no wife present.

FAMILY INCOME AND POVERTY

Trends and Differentials in Family Income

The trend in median family income since 1947 is shown in Table 4. In current dollars, the median income of all families has increased every year in the last decade, including a 7 percent increase between 1979 and 1980. However, as a result of inflation, there has been very little change since 1970 in median family income when expressed in constant (1980) dollars (Table 5). Indeed, there was less than 100 dollars difference between the real median family incomes of 1970 and 1980. Between 1979 and 1980 the average American family experienced a significant decline of 5 percent in real income as the result of a 14.2 percent increase in consumer prices. According to a recent Census Bureau report, "This represents the first statistically significant annual decline in real median family income since 1974-75 and the largest decline recorded in the post-World War II period." In 1980 the median income for White families was $21,904, compared with $12,674 for Black families and $14,716 for Spanish-origin families. All three groups experienced significant declines in 1980, but the rates of change were not significantly different among the three groups.

Part of the difference between the median incomes of Black and White families can be traced to income differentials by family type and to the race differential in family composition. Among all families, the 1980 median income of families with a female householder (no husband present) was $10,408, about 45 percent of the median income for all married-couple families and 39 percent of the median income for married-couple families with the wife in the paid labor force (Table 6). Among families with householders working year round full time, families with a female householder (no husband present) had a median income that was 58 percent of the median income for married-couple families. In conjunction with these facts, Table 6 shows that in 1981, families maintained by a female householder with no husband present represented a much larger proportion of Black families (42 percent) than of White families (12 percent). Thus, one could expect considerable difference in overall median family income between the two race groups on the basis of differentials in family composition.

Family composition differentials cannot account for the total income difference between races however. To illustrate, compare the median incomes for White and Black married-couple families with wife in the paid labor force ($27,238 and $22,795, respectively). In fact, there is more than $6,000 difference between the median incomes of Black and White married-couple families with the wife _not_ in the paid labor force, whether or not the householder works year round full time. Other factors such as education, occupation, and residence may also contribute to differences in income between races.

Trends and Differentials in Family Poverty

One way to make income-type comparisons among various subgroups is to use the poverty (low-income) classification, according to which families (and unrelated individuals) are classified as being above or below the poverty level using poverty thresholds, that is, poverty cutoff levels. Based solely on money income, the poverty classification in effect controls for family size and composition; also, the thresholds are adjusted for inflation each year using the Consumer Price Index. Thus, in 1980 the average poverty threshold for a nonfarm family of four was $8,414, about 13.5 percent higher than the 1979 threshold of $7,412.

Figure 3 shows the time series for families below the poverty level since 1959. Between 1959 and 1969 there was relatively little change in the annual number of families with female householder (no husband present) below the poverty level. But since 1969, there has been a distinctly upward trend in the number of poor families maintained by women. In contrast, the number of all other families below the poverty level declined rapidly until about 1969, and then fluctuated for a decade. Both married-couple families and families with a female householder (no husband present) experienced significant increases in the number below the poverty level between 1979 and 1980. In recent years, about one-half of all families below the poverty level were maintained by women with no husband present. This is in sharp contrast with the early 1960's when 1 out of 4 families below the poverty level were maintained by women with no husband present.

Table 7 provides further details on changes in the distribution of families below the poverty level by race and Spanish origin of the householder. In 1959, families with female householders (no husband present) made up 20 percent of all White families below the poverty level and 30 percent of all Black families below the poverty level. By 1980 this difference widened, as poor families maintained by women grew to comprise 38 percent of all poor White families and 71 percent of all poor Black families. Moreover, 44 percent of all poor families maintained by a female with no husband present had a Black householder in both 1973 and 1980, as compared with 29 percent in 1959. Among all poor families with a householder of Spanish origin less than half were maintained by a woman with no husband present in the years 1973-80 (the period for which data are available).

Family poverty rates are shown in Table 8 by race and Spanish origin. The poverty rate is the percentage of families (or persons) in a given group that is classified as being below the poverty level. Thus, in 1959, almost 43 percent of all families with female householders (no husband present) were below the poverty level established for that year. The poverty rate was 35 percent for such families with a White householder and 65 percent for those with a Black householder. In comparison, the 1959 poverty rate for all other families was 13 percent for families with a White householder and 43 percent for those with a Black householder.

It can be seen in Table 8 that by 1979 the poverty rate had dropped considerably for each race and family group mentioned above. Although the decline generally has been much slower in the last decade, the poverty rate of families maintained by women (no husband present) did reach its lowest point over a 20-year period in 1979 for White and Black families, and the lowest point since 1973 for Spanish-origin families (the earliest year for which data are available). In 1980, however, there was a significant increase in the poverty rate for most groups shown in Table 8; this increase accompanied the 1980 drop in real median income discussed in the last section.

Some rather striking poverty-rate differentials are shown in Table 9. Among all types of families, the poverty rate in 1980 was lowest for White families with no related children under 18 (4 percent) and highest for Black families with five or more related children (70 percent). In each race or ethnic group, the poverty rate rose rapidly with each additional child present in the family. As expected, poverty rates were considerably higher in each subgroup for families maintained by a woman with no husband present; indeed, 9 out of 10 such families maintained by a Black woman with five or more related children were below the poverty level.

There is also a tendency for families below the poverty level to have a somewhat larger average size than the total of all families combined. In 1980, the largest average size among the groups shown in Table 10 occurred for Spanish-origin families below the poverty level.

The Effects of Changing Family Composition on Income and Poverty

The increasing proportion of families maintained by women has undoubtedly affected overall income and poverty levels, since such families tend to be a relatively low-income group. The Bureau of the Census conducted a special study to measure the effect of changes in family composition on income and poverty levels.5/ This analysis did not make adjustments for other factors that are correlated with income, such as occupation, education, and residence. In this study, income and poverty statistics were re-calculated for 1980, assuming that family composition and age structure had remained the same as in 1970. These statistics were then compared to published statistics for 1980 to measure the effect of changes in family composition during the last decade on income and poverty levels.

As would be expected, the analysis suggested a significant correlation between family composition changes and income and poverty levels. Moreover,

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5/ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Special Demographic Analyses, CDS-80-7, Changing Family Composition and Income Differentials, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1982.

the effect was larger for Black families than for White families, since the former group experienced much larger changes in family composition during the last decade. As shown in Table 11, adjusting for changes in family composition raises the growth of real median income for White families from 1 to 3 percent during the last decade. For Black families, however, adjusting for family composition changes converts a 5 percent decline in real median family income during the decade to an 11-percent gain. These data suggest that, in the absence of changes in family composition, the average income of Black families would have increased more rapidly than the average income of White families. Changes in family composition have also had a significant effect on poverty rates during the last decade. As shown in Table 12, the adjusted poverty rate for Black families is 19.9 in 1980, or 9 percentage points lower than the published estimate. The adjusted poverty rate for White families is 5.9 in 1980, about 2 percentage points lower than the published estimate. Thus, the relatively more frequent splitting up of families through divorce and separation and the creation of more female householders in general have been closely associated with the maintenance of high official poverty rates for these groups.

Child Support Payments

With the rapid rise in separation and divorce, the increase in the number of families maintained by women with no husband present, and the relatively low income level of such families, there has been growing interest and concern regarding the adequacy or availability of alternative resources for families with a female householder. In this section and the next, consideration will be given to several types of resources, some of which are of special importance to female family householders. Child-support payments, for example, constitute a potentially significant source of income for separated or divorced women.

Of the 7.1 million ever-divorced, separated, or never-married American women who in 1979 had children under 21 years of age from an absent father, almost half (48 percent) were supposed to have received child support payments in 1978, while another 41 percent had neither been awarded nor had agreements for such payments (Table 13). (See below for percent which actually received payments.) Among the subgroup of these women who had incomes below the poverty level in 1978, less than one-third (30 percent) were supposed to receive child support payments in 1978, and 62 percent had not been awarded payments.

There are important differences by race and ethnicity in the award of child support payments. Thus, in 1978, 59 percent of ever-divorced, separated, or never-married White women with children under 21 were supposed to receive payments, as compared with 22 percent of Black women. Among those women below the poverty level, the percent of White women who were supposed to receive payments dropped to 42 percent, as compared with a much smaller drop to 18 percent for Black women. The comparable figures for women of Spanish origin fell between those for White and Black women.

Among those women who were supposed to receive child support payments in 1978, a somewhat larger proportion of White women (73 percent) than Black women (63 percent) actually received payments, but among women below the poverty level, the proportion of White women who actually received payments (58 percent) was a little smaller than for Black women (61 percent). Almost two-thirds of Spanish origin women who were supposed to receive payments actually did so.

Of the 7.1 million women who had children under 21 years of age from an absent father, 2.5 million (35 percent) actually received some payments in

1978, and only 1.7 million (24 percent) received full payments. Of course, child support payments were of considerable importance to those who received them. As table 14 shows, income from child support represented about one-fifth of the total mean money income for women who received payments in 1978, regardless of race or Spanish origin. In comparison with the $8,940 mean total money income of women who received payments, those women who were awarded but did not receive payments in 1975 had a mean total income of $6,220; even lower was the mean income of women who were not awarded payments ($4,840). Among women with incomes below the poverty level who received child support payments in 1978 such payments constituted about one-third of their total income in 1978.

In summary, of the 7.1 million women with children present from an absent father, about 4.6 million did not receive child support payments in 1978. That is, about 65 percent of these mothers had to rely entirely on sources other than the father for their children's support. About 35 percent of these 4.6 million women had incomes below the poverty level, and about one-third of them received some form of public assistance income.

Noncash Benefits to Households

Several government programs provide assistance to households in the form of noncash benefits. Three types of such benefits will be discussed here, including food stamps, medicaid coverage, and public or other subsidized housing.

Food Stamp Recipiency. According to the Food Stamp Act of 1977, this Federally funded program was intended to permit low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet. Food purchasing power is increased by providing eligible households with coupons which can be used to purchase food.

Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through state and local welfare offices, the Food Stamp Program constitutes a major national income support system that provides benefits to all low-income and low-resource households regardless of household characteristics (e.g., sex, age, disability).

Table 15 provides a brief profile of all American households as of March 1981 (with income for 1980) and households that were receiving food stamps in 1980. Overall, there were 6.8 million households receiving food stamps in 1980, representing 8 percent of the total 82.4 million households. Among households receiving food stamps, 35 percent had a Black householder and 63 percent a White householder whereas among all households, these proportions were 11 percent and 87 percent, respectively. In addition, it may be noted that households maintained by a woman with no husband present accounted for 41 percent of all households receiving food stamps, but only 11 percent of all households regardless of recipiency status. The poverty rate for households receiving food stamps was 65 percent, compared with 13 percent for all households, and the median income for recipient households ($5,540) was less than one-third as large as for all households ($17,710).

Among all households below the poverty level, only 40 percent received food stamps; this figure was 34 percent for poor White households, 59 percent for poor Black households, and 52 percent for poor Spanish-origin households. About 7 out of 10 poor households maintained by a woman with no husband present received food stamps, as did 6 out of 10 poor households with members under 19 years old.

Medicaid Coverage. According to the 1965 Amendments to the Social Security Act (P.L. 89-97), the Medicaid Program is intended "to furnish medical assistance on behalf of needy families with dependent children, and of aged, blind, or permanently and totally disabled individuals whose incomes and resources are insufficient to meet the costs of necessary medical services." Basically a categorical program, medicaid has complex eligibility rules that vary from state to state. Eligible individuals include the categorically eligible (including all recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, most recipients of Supplemental Security Income, and other needy persons who meet basic state cash assistance or other eligibility rules) and the medically needy (persons meeting categorical age, sex, or disability criteria whose money incomes and assets exceed eligibility levels for cash assistance but are not sufficient to meet the cost of medical care). In the data to be reported below for 1980, a household was defined as "covered by medicaid" if one or more adult persons were "enrolled" in medicaid, that is, had a medicaid medical assistance card or incurred medical bills which were paid by medicaid.

Data in Table 15 show that about 1 in 10 households was covered by medicaid in 1980. Among the 8.3 million households covered by medicaid, 67 percent had a White householder and 30 percent a Black householder, a distribution not too dissimilar to that for households receiving food stamps. Moreover, 37 percent were households maintained by a woman with no husband present and 53 percent had members under 19 years old. The poverty rate for medicaid households was 53 percent, somewhat lower than that for households receiving food stamps (65 percent), but considerably higher than that for all households regardless of recipiency status (13 percent). Among all households below the poverty level, the percent covered by medicaid was about the same as the percent receiving food stamps in each of the race or ethnic groups shown in Table 15.

Public or Other Subsidized Housing Recipiency. Under the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (P.L. 75-412), housing assistance is provided to families of low income through either low-rent public housing projects or other subsidized housing programs. Under the Low Rent Public Housing Program, public housing projects are owned, managed and administered by a local housing authority, and participation is determined by program eligibility and availability of housing. Several other programs provide subsidized housing to low-income families either by providing rent supplements (i.e., the government pays the difference between "fair market" rent and the rent paid by the tenant) or by an interest reduction plan (i.e., interest paid on mortgage by an owner is reduced so that subsequent savings may be passed on to tenants in form of lower rent charges).

According to data for 1980 shown in Table 16, about 1 out of 10 renter-occupied households were residing in publicly owned or other subsidized housing. Of the 2.8 million renter households in public or subsidized housing, 37 percent were family households maintained by a woman with no husband present. The poverty rate for all households in public or subsidized housing was 51 percent, more than twice the rate for all renter households. Among the 6.1 million renter households below the poverty level, only 1.4 million (24 percent) were in public or subsidized housing; this percentage was 19 percent for White households, 33 percent for Black households, and 18 percent for Spanish-origin households. Almost one-third of poor family renter-occupied households maintained by a woman with no husband present resided in public or subsidized housing. In general the participation rate of poor households was lower for public or subsidized housing than for the food stamp or medicaid programs.

Noncash Benefits and the Measurement of Poverty

The market value of major means-tested noncash benefits distributed to the low-income population has increased dramatically over the past few decades. As shown in Table 17, the market value of food stamps, free or reduced price school lunches, public housing, and medicaid amounted to $42.4 billion in 1980. By 1980, these noncash benefits outweighed cash public assistance (such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children) by a margin of more than two-to-one.

The official definition of poverty is based on money income alone, and does not take into account the numerous in-kind benefits received by the low-income population. As a result, many analysts feel that the official poverty statistics overstate the true extent of poverty. Noncash benefits have not been incorporated into the official definition of poverty because there has been much disagreement as to how they should be valued. In response to a request from the U.S. Senate, the Census Bureau prepared a research report that presents several alternative methodologies for valuing noncash benefits and measures the effects of these valuations on estimates of the size and composition of the poverty population.6/

The Census report examined three approaches for measuring noncash benefits: (1) market value, (2) recipient or cash equivalent value, and (3) poverty budget share value.

1. The market value is equal to the purchase price in the private market of the goods received by the recipient, e.g., the face value of food stamps.

6/ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Technical Paper No. 50, Alternative Methods for Valuing Selected In-Kind Transfer Benefits and Measuring Their Effect on Poverty, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1982.

2. The recipient or cash equivalent value is the amount of cash that would make the recipient just as well off as the in-kind transfer; it, therefore, reflects the recipient's own valuation of the benefit. The recipient or cash equivalent value is usually less than and never more than the market value. Even though cash equivalent value is the theoretically preferred measure, it is quite difficult to estimate, especially for medical care.
3. The poverty budget share value, which is tied to the current poverty concept, limits the value of food, housing, or medical transfers to the proportions spent on these items by persons at or near the poverty line in 1960-61, when in-kind transfers were minimal. It assumes that in-kind transfers in excess of these amounts are not relevant for determining poverty status because an excess of one type of good (e.g., housing) does not compensate for a deficiency in another good (e.g., medical care). Because the value of in-kind transfers are limited in this way, the poverty budget share approach assigns the lowest average values to in-kind transfers of the three methods used.

This research indicated that valuing noncash benefits has a significant effect on the estimated number of poor. Table 18 indicates that the market value approach for valuing food, housing, and medical benefits would lower the estimated number of poor by about 42 percent in 1979, or from 11.1 to 6.4 percent of the total population. Valuing these benefits using cash equivalent value or poverty budget share value lowers the estimated number of poor by a smaller amount. As noted earlier, families maintained by a woman with no husband present have much higher poverty rates than other families and are also more likely to receive noncash benefits. Table 19 indicates that valuing these benefits at market value would halve the poverty rate for female householders--from 35 to 18 percent for 1979.

The official method used to measure the poverty population is still based on money income alone. The Census Bureau has not endorsed any particular valuation method, and moreover, is not empowered to change the concept or measurement of poverty. The Census Bureau study has presented the various methods for valuing means-tested noncash benefits and discussed their strengths and weaknesses. More work needs to be done in the area of nonmeans-tested noncash benefits, such as employer fringe benefits, the advantages of owner-occupied housing, and so forth. The value of these benefits is actually larger than means-tested benefits, and must be taken into account if we are to have a better understanding of the distribution of income in our society.

FAMILIES AND EMPLOYMENT

Employment of Women

One of the more impressive changes in the American civilian labor force over the last half century has been the increasing participation of women in the work force. As Table 20 shows, the labor force participation rate for all women of working age has more than doubled since 1930, rising from 24 percent to 52 in 1981. Thus, more than half of working-age women are now in the civilian labor force. As a result of this movement it is not surprising that, as a proportion of the total labor force, women now comprise 43 percent, almost double the percentage recorded in 1930. The labor force participation of women has risen concurrently with an increase in the number of young unmarried women and in the number of families maintained by women with no husband present.

There is another feature of the rising labor force participation of women that is of considerable importance in terms of changing social and economic behavior, even though its motivation may not be quite so apparent as that of the female family householder. The feature referred to is the rising number of multi-earner families, a trend whose major component has been the growing propensity for wives to participate in the labor force. According to data for 1981, 3 out of every 5 married-couple families reported having 2 or more wage earners in the year 1980. Indeed, both the husband and wife reported being wage earners in 1980 in more than half (that is, 52 percent) of all married-couple families surveyed in March 1981. This compares with 46 percent of married-couple families having both husband and wife as earners in 1969.

The impact of wives' earnings on family income is demonstrated in Table 21. In 1980, the median family income of married-couple families with both husband and wife as earners was $27,745, which was 36 percent higher than the $20,472 median income of married-couple families with only the husband as earner. Part of the motivation for increased participation of wives may derive from the slowdown in growth of real family income during the last decade as compared with prior decades (see the discussion of Tables 5 and 8 in prior sections of this paper), and perhaps also from the declining real value of federal income tax deductions for dependents. To some extent, the American family has probably avoided an actual deterioration of its economic status by the increased participation of wives in the labor force, but their entry could also have affected wage rates.

The labor force participation rates of women in 1981 are shown in Table 22 according to marital status and presence of children. More than half of all married women, spouse present, were in the labor force in 1981. The rate for Black wives was somewhat higher than this (59 percent), while the rates for White and Spanish-origin wives were close to the one-half mark (50 percent and 47 percent, respectively).

Among White wives the labor force participation rate was about one-third larger for those with own children 6 to 17 years, none younger, than for those with 1 or more own children under 6 years (62 percent and 46 percent, respectively). For divorced White women the corresponding rates rose dramatically to 85 percent with children 6 to 17 years old only and 66 percent with children under 6. Even with no children under 18 years, divorced White women had a 73 percent participation rate.

Black wives and divorced women had the same pattern of a greater participation rate for those with children 6 to 17 only than for those with children under 6 years. However, the rate for divorced Black women with preschool children was slightly lower than the rate for married Black women, spouse present, with such children, contrary to the pattern for White women.

In general, Table 22 indicates that participation rates were uniformily greater for Black women than for White women only in the category of married, spouse present. Rates for never-married and divorced Black women tended to be somewhat lower than for White women in these two categories. The rates for Spanish-origin wives were in almost all cases lower than for White wives, irrespective of the presence of children in the age categories shown in Table 22.

Employment and Childbearing

As described in the last section, a remarkable pattern of labor force activity has emerged for American women, with participation rates ranging from almost half of all wives with preschool children to more than 4 out of 5 divorced women with school-age children. These figures are essential in studying the national pattern of labor force participation, but they do not give a clear indication of the interaction between labor force activity and childbearing. In recent years there has been a tendency for employment and childbearing to become more intermingled in the lives of women. Further insight into the concomitance of such activities comes from analyses of data (Tables 23 and 24) from Cycle I of the National Survey of Family Growth. This survey was conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics, and it yielded data based on interviews with a national sample of women aged 15 to 44 years in 1973.

For the three cohorts of women first married in 1955-59, 1960-64, and 1965-69, the upper panel of Table 23 shows the percent who worked between marriage and first birth, while the lower panel shows the percent who worked between first and second births. As the figures for all women demonstrate, each successive cohort has had a larger proportion who worked during these two periods of family formation. In the latest cohort (1965-69), 4 out of 5 worked between marriage and first birth, and over half worked between first and second births. White women had a little greater tendency than Black women to work between marriage and first birth, but the opposite was the case for the percent who worked between first and second births. Some caution must be exercised in interpreting these statistics, because differences between race groups could be related to other uncontrolled variables, such as education or employment experience. In particular, the proportion of women working between marriage and first birth increased considerably with educational attainment at marriage. However, there was no clear pattern across cohorts in the relation between education at marriage and the proportion who worked between first and second births.

Table 24 provides a more detailed analysis of the relationship between employment and childbearing. The data in this analysis focus on American women 15 to 44 years old in 1973 who had their latest pregnancy (ending in a live birth) in the period 1970-73. The percentages in the first column of Table 24 indicate that a sizable proportion of women worked during their latest pregnancies, although the percent who did so declined with parity (number of children born). Moreover, a higher proportion (50 percent) of Black women worked during their pregnancies in 1970-73 than was the case for White (42 percent) or Hispanic (37 percent) women.

The second column of Table 24 gives the results of a statistical analysis, in which the percent who worked during their latest pregnancy was adjusted by controlling for selected variables, including religious denomination, religious participation, education, husband's income, age at birth of latest child, occupation, region and place of residence, year of latest birth, and either race or parity. The results indicate that race differentials remained after adjusting for the effects of these other variables, although the adjusted percents were somewhat greater than the unadjusted for Hispanic women and women of other races. By parity, the adjusted and unadjusted percents are essentially the same, indicating a significant effect associated with parity beyond the effects of the other variables.

The third column of Table 24 shows the percent of women employed during their latest pregnancy in the period 1970-73, who returned to work by 1973 following the latest birth. Black women had a greater tendency to return to work than did White and Hispanic women; after adjusting for other selected variables, White women retained a lower rate of return to work (60 percent), while the rates for Hispanic and Black women became not significantly different (69 percent and 68 percent, respectively). Data by parity indicate that the rate of return to work is lower after first births than after higher order births. In short, women in their second or higher order pregnancies are less likely than lower parity women to work during pregnancy, but if they do they are more likely to return to work after pregnancy.

Child Care Arrangements

The statistics presented in previous parts of this section indicate that large and increasing proportions of American women with children participate in the civilian labor force, regardless of whether they maintain their own household with no spouse present or are married with spouse present. For many of these women, especially those with preschool-age children, arrangements for child care are of special concern. Table 25 presents information on the trend in child care arrangements for children under 6 years according to the employment status of the mother. For those preschool children whose mother is employed full time, the proportion who received care in their own home has declined over time, from 57 percent in 1958 to 29 percent in 1977. There has been a significant increase in the proportion cared for in group care centers, but by 1977 this arrangement accounted for just 15 percent of the children. A sizable portion of the difference has been taken up by growth in the proportion cared for in another home, especially by a nonrelative.

Among those children whose mother worked part time, a fairly large proportion received care in their own home, especially by their father. A comparatively large proportion of children whose mother worked part time were cared for by the mother while she was working, although this percentage declined considerably between 1965 and 1977; meanwhile, the proportion cared for in another home increased.

SUMMARY

Information on recent changes in marriage, divorce, and family structure provided the background for a discussion of the economic condition of the family and the employment status of women. Incorporated in the discussion were several special topics, including child support payments, noncash benefits to households (food stamps, medicaid, and public or other subsidized housing), childbearing during and after pregnancy, and child care arrangements.

The following highlights summarize this discussion:

- During the mid-1970's, the fertility of American women was at a rate that would result in about 1.8 children by the end of their childbearing years, a level approximately one-half that recorded during the peak of the baby boom in the 1950's.
- Marriage rates declined in the decade of the 1970's to the lowest level since 1940, so that by 1981 about 1 out of 5 women aged 25 to 29 years was still never married.
- Births out-of-wedlock rose from 400,000 in 1970 to 600,000 in 1979. Among all White children born in 1979, 9 percent were born to unmarried mothers, compared with 55 percent of Black children born out-of-wedlock in the same year.
- Divorce is at record high levels, and if current rates persist almost half of all marriages would end in divorce.
- Single-parent families increased by more than three-fourths during the 1970's, while married-couple families with own children present actually declined.

- o Median family income increased by 7 percent to $21,020 in 1980, but after adjustment for inflation at a rate of 14.2 percent, the 1980 real median family income represented a net decline of 5 percent from 1979, the largest decline recorded since the Second World War.

- o The poverty rate for families rose significantly in 1980 to 10.3 percent, the highest level since 1967.

- o Changes in family composition are an important factor that is significantly correlated with measured changes in income and poverty levels.

- o Among all ever-divorced, currently separated, or never-married women with children under 21 from an absent father, less than half were supposed to have received child support payments in 1978, and less than half of these women actually did receive full payments.

- o Among households that were below the poverty level in 1980 and were maintained by women with no husband present, 46 percent were receiving food stamps and 46 percent were covered by medicaid in 1980. Accounting for these noncash benefits significantly lowers the estimated number of poor.

- o In 1981, more than half of all women of working age were in the civilian labor force; 56 percent of all wives with children under 18 were in the labor force compared with 78 percent of all divorced women with children.

- o Among women who work full time, arrangements for child care are increasingly being made outside the home, especially in the home of a nonrelative or in group care centers.

In general, this country possesses several excellent statistical programs which continually monitor the status of the American family. There are well developed time series that facilitate comparisons with the past as well as provide the basis for making projections into the future. Of special note are time series from decennial censuses and vital statistics that extend back more than a hundred years and detailed annual survey data developed after the Second World War. As changes have occurred, however, it has become apparent that there now exist areas that should be much more extensively investigated in order to enable the Nation's policy makers to better understand the condition of families. For example, very little data are now available concerning adoption, and the reporting system for abortion should be expanded. In addition, statistics relating to marriage and divorce should be enhanced, in order to determine changes in the likelihood of divorce and remarriage, with their implications for the status of stepfamilies. This country must strive to maintain and improve the full range of statistics that give a continual reading of the social and economic situation in which the Nation's families exist.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chapman. I happened to read near midnight last night most of your prepared statement, and since you are one of the few individuals who has tried to conform to his time limit, you have necessarily condensed your statement much more than I expected. If you will, I would like to check some of the things that I had thought as rather important and see if we cannot ask you questions about those.

Would you care to give us something about the development of fertility rates among women over the past few decades, back to about 1950?

Mr. CHAPMAN. I do not have the chart for fertility rates, but Mr. Weed perhaps does there. We know that the fertility rate has dropped and that it is now below the replacement level. We are at historic low levels of fertility or very close to it in our population.

Go ahead and read that.

Mr. WEED. The National Center for Health Statistics publishes a fertility rate which——

Senator DENTON. Would you put that closer to your mouth, please, sir, and I am sure that you can relate the drop in fertility rates or at the same time mention the marriage rates. They are discussed in the same paragraph in the prepared statement.

Mr. WEED. OK. Yes; the fertility rate that we put into the testimony showed that it had dropped to about 1.8 children per woman.

Senator DENTON. Which, as Mr. Chapman points out, means you do not replace the two parents. Has that development been cranked into the computations regarding social security in the year 2020, for example?

Mr. CHAPMAN. They have been because the Social Security Administration gets all of our materials.

Senator DENTON. I just wonder if they are going on that kind of development continuing, which it appears to be doing in an accelerating way.

Mr. CHAPMAN. Well, that is right. Mr. Chairman, we have, as Mr. Weed said at one point, a fertility rate that is below the replacement level, and as I said, that is the lowest——

Senator DENTON. Of course, what I am referring to is the number of people in the work force at year *x* compared to those retired and not replacing themselves.

Mr. CHAPMAN. Absolutely.

Mr. WEED. We have population projections up to the year 2050, and I think those have been used in calculating some of these.

Mr. **Chapman**. It is a major problem. We are not going to have the workers in the system to support the elderly.

Senator **Denton**. Would you go through the marriage trends, including the ones referring—rates of remarriages, the rate of first marriages in particular over the past few decades.

Mr. **Chapman**. Could you tell us which page you are looking at or which chart.

Senator **Denton**. I am looking at no chart, but there is a chart which summarizes it. I am on page 3 of your prepared statement, and I think it is chart one or two that covers that. But they are extremely striking.

Mr. **Weed**. Yes. The extent to which the first marriage rate has dropped for many of the age groups is probably not too widely known. We note that the first marriage rate for women aged 18 to 19 years old declined 43 percent between 1969 and 1979. And we noted here also that in the same 10-year period, the first marriage rate for women 20 to 24 years old dropped 48 percent in a decade. There was a 29-percent drop for women 25 to 29.

Senator **Denton**. What is interesting is one hears so often that marriages are being delayed until a later age. But your chart indicates rather strongly that while that trend is true, the overall proportion of first marriages contracted at any age has dropped substantially.

Mr. **Chapman**. Yes. The same story applies to child birth. People are putting off having children on average to a later age, but it is also true that they are not having as many children, even as many as they predict they will have.

Senator **Denton**. I believe those were for white persons. Would you go into the rates for black persons, please.

Mr. **Weed**. Figure one shows the rate for all women of all races combined. The rates do not exist by race. The only place that you can get information by race on this would be looking at it a slightly different way as in table 1 which follows the three figures in the handout.

Senator **Denton**. Well, maybe I am mistaken, but I believe that on page 3 of your statement you have the first marriage rates for women, white women. Oh, I see. That is women of all races.

Mr. **Weed**. Right.

Senator **Denton**. Then you do break it out. On page 4 you say, "In general, black women have significantly higher proportions never married than do white women. For example, in 1981 the proportion of black women age 30 to 34 years who had never married was more than double the corresponding proportion for white women. Indeed, the differential between white and black women seems to be increasing in most age groups shown in table 1."

At least you have that comparison; is that correct?

Mr. **Weed**. That is correct.

Senator **Denton**. Then you had the out-of-wedlock births, but I believe you showed that on the charts that you had here, Mr. Chapman.

Well, with my subcommittee staff I am going to analyze the entire statement that you gave us and all of the charts that you gave us very carefully.

Would you, Mr. Chapman, care to deduce such implications as you consider deducible regarding the implications for our children, our society's attitude toward children, and our society in general, of what you have just charted out and talked about with us?

Mr. CHAPMAN. One of the implications, it seems to me, Senator, is that the way we perceive children has changed in society. In the past, not recent past, but certainly in the past centuries, children were seen as an economic asset. If you lived on a farm, which most people did, children could help you in the fields, and then when you got older you could live with them.

Today, children are perceived, it seems, as an economic liability in many cases; it costs a great deal of money to provide for them, and that amount of money seems to be rising, and the later life relationship is diminished somewhat, to some extent.

As a consequence, it is becoming harder and for that matter less desirable from an economic standpoint for people to have children and keep them and maintain their lives in the way that most people would like to.

So, consequently, it seems that this may be one of the motivations for people having fewer children. And the economy and perhaps the government itself needs to look at that and needs to consider the ramifications of that kind of change.

Senator DENTON. I would make an observation, regarding your mention that the social seems to be meeting the economic here. I wonder—I do not want to ask you a leading question—but I have made the observation on the floor and in many speeches that issues such as illegitimacy, divorce, maybe abortion, are not just social issues. "Social issue" has become a very narrow term. These issues not only involve economics, but in many cases the social trends underlie economic problems. Indeed, we seem to be looking at social problems such as child abuse, adoption, this, that, and the other thing as segmented, separate, disconnected problems.

Whereas, in reality, they are all interrelated with respect to the subject of the integrity or the stability of the family, which I think throughout the history of civilization has been found to be the indispensable nursery for the development of citizenship. And in that case, with weakened citizenship because of less rearing, with the Latin word educare not only meaning to educate but in its early days connoted to mean to rear; the parents as well as the teachers, but particularly the parents seem to be having less time to do that and less access in that they are separating from their children through divorce, and I think this has transcendent impact, not only in economics, but even in the strategic picture with over half a million not having registered for a possible draft, since there is a respect for authority involved in rearing a child.

Would you have any comments on any of that?

Mr. CHAPMAN. Well, the demographics definitely do have an economic side to them. And you mentioned the military; we have a decline in the number of 18- and 19-year-olds in the population, and that will have implications for the maintenance of the volunteer military, for example. That is one economic consequence of the demographics and a direct result of birth rates.

We had a population with an historically high birth rate back in the forties and fifties, and they gave birth to a population who are now adult and have an historically low birth rate. One of the interesting studies that came out recently from the American Enterprise Institute addressed what has happened to the Government's taxation policies toward dependents, most of whom are children?

In 1947, the dependency deduction was $600. It is now $1,000. If it had kept pace with inflation, by 1980 it would have been $4,400. When you are looking at the ability of families to raise children and what calculations they have to make about whether the wife goes back into the work force, under what circumstances, and so forth, you can see that that makes a real difference right there, just that one individual item.

Senator DENTON. So you are saying that over the years the allowance for children has increased from $600 to what, $1,200?

Mr. CHAPMAN. $1,000.

Senator DENTON. $1,000. My children have since, all but one, I think, gotten out of the exemption category. I had seven, and I was always appalled because if it is in the interest of a nation at least for a generation to replace itself and to have people in the work force after they are so old that they need to tax those workers—if it is in the need of the Nation to have youth to serve in its armed services to protect the freedoms and pleasures and possessions which we have—and it certainly is—then it seems that we could alleviate the economic stress on the couple in the interest of the Nation as a whole by such an adjustment. Would you agree with that?

Mr. CHAPMAN. Personally, I would.

Senator DENTON. Has the Census Bureau been tracking individual families over a period of time to determine the number of years they spend below the poverty line or on welfare and the actual remarriage rate?

Mr. CHAPMAN. Well, as a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, we have not, but we will be doing so soon. Over the past several years, a program called the Survey of Income and Program Participation, or SIPP for short, was being developed. It was cut out of the budget a year and a half ago, and then restored.

So we went—we had to stop it for a year, but we have picked it back up again, and we will be doing what is called a longitudinal panel on this subject so that we will be able to track people over years for a number of different factors, including assets, their participation in Federal programs, and the sort of thing that you were talking about in your question.

Senator DENTON. Speaking of that poverty line, I am struck again with the relevance of the finding of Dr. Thomas Sowell, a black Ph. D. out at Stanford University who found that if we gave one-third directly to the poor of the money which the Government expends in poverty programs, we would have no poverty. All the people in poverty would be lifted above the poverty line.

It strikes me that in the bureaucracy is where it appears that there is a real trickle down that is unfortunate. I cannot believe that the research and the truly required bureaucracy to handle that planning and administration would absorb more than two-thirds of the money which is taken in taxes and expended, appropriated for the poor.

What have been the historical trends in the United States with respect to women working outside the home? Were the numbers of women staying at home in the forties and—in the forties and fifties an anomaly, or are today's trends the anomaly?

And I will elaborate on that question because I recognize that it is not that simple because the kind of work outside the home, the number of hours outside the home, the lifestyle of the working women with respect to what she does in her offworking times also affects what is gotten at in this question.

And it mostly refers to the last hearing in which we discussed effects of family breakdown on children and a witness testified that we have gone from the consideration of not needing to be with the child that much to having adopted of the term "quality time". He stated that quality time cannot be determined by the parent; it is determined by the child, the time when he or she feels a need to be attended by the parent. And then he said we have gone from that to the sociological advances involved in quality telephone time by which one is satisfied that parental obligations and the child's needs are being satisfied by telephone calls, quality times.

But again, were the numbers of women staying at home in the forties and fifties an anomaly, and today are we returning back toward a norm that existed in, say, the 19th century? And if so, what observations would you make about that?

Mr. CHAPMAN. Mr. Chairman, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of women of working age in the labor force since the turn of the century. In fact, it went from 20 percent in 1900 to about 35.8 percent in 1945. And it is up to 52 percent as of 1981.

It has been steadily increasing, and our projections are that it will continue to increase. One of the steepest increases has come in the percentage of women or wives with children under 6 years of age. The percentage of those women who are in the labor force now is, I believe, 48 percent.

Senator DENTON. What was the earliest year you gave, though, Mr. Chapman?

Mr. CHAPMAN. Well, the earliest year I gave for total number of women in the work force as a percent of all women of working age was 20 percent back in 1900. By 1940 it was 25.8 percent. But then it went up sharply during World War II to 35.8 percent in 1945, dropped slightly by 1950, then started back up again and is now 52 percent.

Senator DENTON. I wonder when we did it in 1900 with respect to working outside the home, if we regarded working out in the fields on a farm as working within the home.

Mr. CHAPMAN. I imagine that was true. I imagine they did include that as working in the home.

Senator DENTON. I guess it is impossible for you gentlemen to track, but I would think that there would be some—since we were largely an agricultural nation in the 1890 period, women would be out in the fields as they are now out in the Ph. D. and computer fields. But it seems that there was always a teamwork element involved with the husband and the wife connected with those children geographically and as a social entity, Whereas now there has become a separation of interests and purposes which dichotomizes the relationship in a way that is not that simply analyzed by whether one works or does not work.

Mr. CHAPMAN. It is difficult to analyze. The definitions are also difficult. We have had a lot of discussion about how you can separate out the motivations for people being in the work force, particularly wives with children and it is difficult to distinguish between women who are in the work force strictly because they are interested in their careers and those that are in the work force strictly because of economic needs of the family or desire for the family and those that are a mixture.

But it would appear that certainly the economics do play a big part in women getting into the work force, particularly women with small children.

Senator DENTON. I imagine there would be an interesting distinction to be drawn in the perception of what constitutes economic need over those decades, too.

Mr. CHAPMAN. Absolutely correct. What is economic need? Is it maintaining the present standard of living? As I mentioned, the Bureau of Labor Statistics had a study that showed that it would take, I believe, 15 percent more income for a family to have one child and still maintain their previous standard of living, and 67 percent more to have two children. There is an exponential growth for the cost of having children.

Senator DENTON. Well, what I am sort of getting at is Mr. Gallup said that most Americans value their family life more than they do their income. And if that is the case, would we not be contradicting that set of values were we to sacrifice the former for an incremental increase in the latter?

Mr. CHAPMAN. That is a good question. I think that some people are at least conceiving of what they are doing as maintaining a sufficient income to provide adequately for their family and that those two actually go together.

Senator DENTON. Well, for your information and that of whoever cares, I consider that an interesting question. I do not consider with anything but sympathy and empathy the problem of the single woman, the single parent who has to work. I think that woman needs perhaps more consideration than she is getting now. And I also believe that by the hierarchy of values which we have established by virtue of the way media, literature, and so forth, handles things—even academe—that we may have depreciated the nobility and utility associated with the somewhat unglamorous tasks of spousehood and motherhood as compared to that of computer work.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chapman. And thank you, gentlemen, for all the help.

We will, as I say, analyze and use all of your findings with great care on the subcommittee and I hope use it beneficially.

Mr. CHAPMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator DENTON. For our next panel we have Dr. Greg Duncan, Associate Research Scientist with the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan; and Dr. Harriet McAdoo from the School of Social Work at Howard University. Dr. McAdoo—and I will ask them to come forward—is the author of a well-known book entitled, "The Black Family." Dr. Duncan, you are already there, and I will ask you to proceed alphabetically. So, Dr. Duncan, would you care to go first.

STATEMENTS OF GREG J. DUNCAN, ASSOCIATE RESEARCH SCIENTIST, INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, AND HARRIET McADOO, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, HOWARD UNIVERSITY

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you very much.

With the exception of the new Survey of Income and Program Participation that Mr. Chapman mentioned, the Census Bureau surveys on the economic status of households provide us only with a series of annual snapshot pictures of the population at each point in time.

Over the past two decades, they show a sharp increase in the fraction of households headed by a woman and a growing proportion of poor households headed by women. But because the Census Bureau does not follow the same families from one year to the next, their surveys fail to provide information on the dynamic processes that underlie the point in time numbers.

For example, conventional Census Bureau surveys cannot measure the individual changes in economic status that accompany divorce or remarriage. Dynamic information of this kind is provided by the Panel Study of Income Dynamics conducted at the University of Michigan and currently funded by the National Science Foundation.

This project has been monitoring the economic fortunes of a nationally representative sample of American families each year since 1968.[1]

I would like today to summarize the often surprising evidence on the links between changes in marital status and changes in economic status that have been discovered in past analyses of this rich set of data.

Among the major findings of this study are, first, the economic fortunes of nearly all families fluctuate substantially over time, and the flow of families into and out of poverty and on and off welfare is quite large.

Second, family composition changes, such as divorce, marriage and remarriage are more important than any other single factor in accounting for fluctuations in economic fortunes.

Third, divorce is often economically disastrous for the women and children involved in it because children typically go with their mothers following a divorce, little of the loss of the ex-husband's income is made up by alimony or child support payments, and the earnings potential of women generally and of recently divorced women in particular is quite low.

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[1] The Panel Study of Income Dynamics has been directed by James N. Morgan and conducted by the Survey Research Center of The University of Michigan. It has been funded by the National Science Foundation, by the Department of Health and Human Services and its predecessors and by several private foundations. It began in 1968 with a representative sample of families that oversampled poor and minority households. Since then, it has followed all family members, even if families themselves have been split apart by divorce or children leaving home, or have been combined through marriage or some less formal union. The annual interviews gather a wealth of information on the employment and income of all family members. These features make it a unique resource for monitoring changes in family composition and economic status.

Fourth, remarriage often ends the spell of misfortune for white but not black women and children. Remarriage produced dramatic improvements in the economic well being of both groups.

Fifth, the greater incidence of one-parent black families explains less than one-third of the higher incidence of poverty among black children.

And sixth, there is little consistent evidence that AFDC payments are a factor in promoting divorce or in preventing remarriage.

Senator DENTON. Dr. Duncan, excuse me.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes.

Senator DENTON. I definitely lost the trend of thought in the statement a couple of paragraphs back, a couple of sentences back. And I know I am just reading it wrong, and I may be wasting time: "Remarriage often ends the spell of misfortune for white but not black women and children. Remarriage produces dramatic improvements in the economic well being of both groups."

Mr. DUNCAN. When it occurs.

Senator DENTON. First you say remarriage ends the spell of misfortune for white but not black.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes.

Senator DENTON. And then you say remarriage—oh, you mean that remarriage often ends the spell of misfortune for white because it occurs more often with white women——

Mr. DUNCAN. That is right.

Senator DENTON. —but not as often with black women. I see.

Mr. DUNCAN. But when it happens for either group, which is much more frequent for whites than blacks, it does produce dramatic improvements.

Senator DENTON. I see. Thank you.

Mr. DUNCAN. In order to provide some perspective on the effects of divorce on marriage and economic status, I would like to begin with some brief remarks on the dynamic nature of family economic well-being in our society. Evidence from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics shows a surprising amount of change in the economic position of America's families, even among the poor.[2]

We find that only 60 percent of the individuals living in poverty in 1 year are found to be poor in the next, and the group of persistently poor individuals is considerably smaller than indicated by the single-year Census Bureau figures.

This does not deny that long term poverty exists and imposes great hardship; quite the contrary. Persistent poverty does exist and is more concentrated among families headed by black women than single year Census Bureau figures would indicate.

What the evidence does suggest, however, is that many of those who come into contact with poverty, including those in households headed by women, do so for short periods of time. Parallel to these findings about poverty are those about the nature of contact with the welfare system.

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[2] Findings from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics on changes in family well-being are summarized in Duncan and Morgan (1981), in Duncan et al. (forthcoming), chapter 1 and in Bane (1976), chapters 1 and 2. Studies of the dynamics of poverty and welfare use are summarized in Duncan et al. (forthcoming), chapters 2 and 3. Findings on the extent of turnover in the welfare population have been confirmed in several longitudinal studies of AFDC records.

Senator DENTON. Excuse me. I have to interrupt you again in order for me to clarify for myself what you are getting at.

Mr. DUNCAN. Certainly.

Senator DENTON. When you state that people are going in and out of poverty, does that imply that they on their own are getting out of poverty, or that having gotten into the poverty zone, roughly one-third of them have been lifted out by public assistance?

Mr. DUNCAN. The poverty figures include public assistance, the cash transfers, as part of family income. What happens is that spells of poverty end for a variety of reasons: the earned income of the family may increase; occasionally it will be welfare income that will end the spell of poverty; what is quite often the case for female headed families is that marriage will end the spell of poverty. So it is often the husband's labor earnings that pull the family out of poverty in the event of marriage.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, sir.

Mr. DUNCAN. Long-term welfare recipients do exist, but as with poverty, many of those who come into contact with welfare do so for only short periods of time and even when receiving welfare are unlikely to depend on welfare income exclusively.

Furthermore, most young adults leaving welfare dependent homes are not likely to begin receiving welfare themselves. This suggests that our thinking about antipoverty policy ought not to be dominated by stereotypes of long-term poor or long-term intergenerational welfare families.

What accounts for the general volatility in family economic fortunes? Our extensive search through a list of factors that includes changes in work hours, earnings, unemployment, family structure, and characteristics such as education, attitudes, and background show that changes in the composition of families, especially divorce and remarriage, are sufficiently frequent and dramatic in their effects to rank first in importance.

Family composition changes often have disastrous effects on the economic fortunes of women and children; in contrast, the economic status of men was often higher after a divorce. There are several well known reasons for this. Children typically reside with the mother after a divorce rather than the father. Women earn considerably less than men, and compensatory income transfers, such as payments for child support and alimony are insufficient to make up for much of the lost income.

But just as divorce is economically disastrous for many of the women and children involved in it, marriage and remarriage is beneficial for them. Following a divorce, most white women remain unmarried for relatively short periods of time.[3] When they are remarried, their spells of poverty often end.

But some white women and most black women remain unmarried for substantial periods of time, and the persistence of their economic problems is considerably worse.[4]

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[3] More than one-half of the white women who separated or divorced in the late 1960's had remarried within five years. The comparable fraction for black women was 17 percent (Thornton and Rodgers, 1983). Note that while five years may be short relative to the life-span of the adult women, it represents more than one-fourth of total time individuals spend as children.

[4] To illustrate the magnitude of the changes associated with changes in marital status, we can compare the economic status of a representative group of adult men and women at two points in

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The overwhelming response of women who divorce is to begin or to continue to work rather than to receive welfare income.[5] Because of this, women with established careers and prior work experience do considerably better as heads of their own families than women without that prior experience.

For white women, changes in their own labor income made up more than twice as much of the ex-husband's lost income as alimony and child support and more than 10 times as much as the receipt of welfare income.

But despite this, the absolute increase in labor income earned by the woman was quite low and not nearly enough to offset the loss in the ex-husband's earned income. For black women, labor income increased by a comparable amount, but alimony and child support payments were half the size of those of white women, while the amount of welfare income they received was considerably higher.

It is clear that neither the private transfer system of alimony and child support nor public income transfers come close to preserving the economic status of the women and children involved in divorce.

The economic consequences of divorce are particularly severe for black women and children chiefly because the chance that a divorced or separated black woman will remarry is considerably lower than for white women.[6] But it would be a mistake to blame the racial differences and the incidence of poverty among children entirely on the higher rates of single parent black families.

Evidence from the panel study indicates that only about one-third of the differential incidence of poverty between black and white children can be attributed to this source. Indeed, black children in intact, two-parent families experienced more poverty than did white children in one-parent families.

Given the changes in marital status have such dramatic effects on the poverty status and general economic well-being of women and children, it becomes important to attempt to understand the causes of divorce and remarriage, particularly with an eye toward insuring the public support systems that have been designed to cushion the economic blow of divorce are not themselves contributing to the rising number of divorces or retarding remarriages.

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time, 1967 and 1973. (Duncan (1976), Duncan and Morgan (1976), Hoffman and Holmes (1976) and Hoffman (1977)). (More recent analyses have confirmed that these results are fairly representative of more recent periods (Bane and Weiss (1980), Duncan and Morgan (1981), Espenshade (1979), Hill (forthcoming)). For couples remaining married during this time, per capita family income rose more than 20 percent. For men who divorced, per capita family income rose by almost as much—17 percent. For women who divorced, family income fell nearly 30 percent and per capita family income fell by about 7 percent. We found that nearly one-third of the initially nonpoor women who underwent a divorce or separation fell below the poverty line. In contrast, women who married between these two points in time enjoyed a spectacular increase in economic well-being: family income more than doubled, per capita family income nearly doubled and nearly 90 percent of those who were initially poor and remarried had climbed out of poverty by the end of the period.

[5] Nearly 80 percent of white women and 70 percent of black women who divorced or separated between 1967 and 1973 were working in 1973. The comparable fraction of them who received welfare income in 1973 was 5 and 16 percent respectively (Hoffman and Holmes, 1976).

[6] Over half of the black children born in 1970 spent at least 1 of their first 8 years in household with only one parent and nearly one-third spent every 1 of the 8 years with only one parent. Both of these figures are many times higher than for white children. These family composition differences contribute to dramatic differences in the economic resources of the families of these young children. More than two-thirds of young black children (versus 20 percent of white children) lived in poverty at least 1 year of the decade of the seventies, and for nearly one-third (versus 2 percent for white children) poverty was persistent (Hill (forthcoming)).

Social scientists have not been particularly successful at understanding what goes into these decisions and the role that economic incentives might have on them. There have been numerous attempts to search for possible effects of welfare programs, especially AFDC on divorce and remarriage.[7] A comprehensive review of this evidence concluded that "findings of this research have not shown convincingly that the availability of more rather than some AFDC makes much, if any, difference in rates of divorce, separation, or remarriage." [8]

Thank you, Senator.

[The following information was supplied for the record:]

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[7] Such research has been hindered by the fact that it is not possible to compare the behavior of individuals in the current AFDC system with that of individuals living in a comparable world that offers no AFDC system, simply because the latter does not exist. Instead the strategy must be to compare individuals living in States with relatively large benefits to "otherwise similar" individuals living in States with smaller benefits. The "otherwise similar" condition is produced by an analysis that adjusts statistically for other factors that may effect divorce and remarriage.

[8] Lane (1981) p. 37. Similar conclusions are reached by Bishop (1980). It was not the case that every study conducted failed to find effects. But either the effects that were found were not quantitatively large or similar studies fails to replicate the results.

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Senator DENTON. Thank you, Dr. Duncan. Dr. McAdoo, would you care to make your statement.

Ms. MCADOO. Senator Denton, I would like to focus the discussion of the broken home to an examination of the effects of the stress of single parenting.

Families, over the history of our country, have existed in many forms. The family structure has adapted itself to the historical and economic forces that were at play at any one point in time. Wars and death have caused broken families in the past. At the present time we are seeing an increase in single parents because of four main forces: one, the increase in divorces; two, the increased earlier sexual activity of adolescents; three, the increase in unmarried pregnancies where the child is not given up for adoption; and four, the high unemployment of young black men that prevents them from marrying when a pregnancy does occur.

The major difference between the single parent of 200 years ago and today is that single parenting due to death is socially acceptable and supported, while single parenting due to divorce is only beginning to be accepted. But when it is due to out of wedlock pregnancy, it is often considered to be morally offensive.

Regardless of the causes of the single status, it is increasing. Single parent families are now found across all racial, religious, and economic groups. There are five conclusions that I have drawn from my research over the past decade on black single and married mothers.

One, women who are raising children alone are under higher levels of stress than those who are married. I have found single mothers to have significantly more intense stress and to face these traumas more frequently than married mothers, even when the single mothers were in professional jobs.

Two, single mothers are under financial stresses because of the feminization of poverty. Families of single women have six times the poverty rate of married couples. 54 percent of all white, but 70 percent of all black single mothers are in poverty.

Three, single black women face severe financial stresses because the interaction of their gender and their race compounds the difficulty of their single marital status. Not all women receive awards, and award levels are notoriously low: $2,800 for whites, but only $1,300 for blacks. Yet only 25 percent of those who are eligible actually receive support.

Four, women who are more resourceful in coping with these stresses will be able to more effectively meet the developmental needs of their children. When the mother's basic needs are met, mothers are more effective in communicating with their children and their child's environment.

Five, one important coping mechanism traditionally used by blacks and other women of color has been the extensive use of support networks. This support has been provided by the extended family, other close friends, and the religious and social institutions within their community.

It is important to note that not all black families are amenable to the birth of out-of-wedlock children. One faulty stereotype has been that the black community casually accepts these teen pregnancies. This is far from the truth. The influence of the traditional church may be stronger in ethnic communities than in nonethnic families.

The main traditional difference between black and nonblack families is that once a child is born, the child will not be rejected and placed up for adoption, nor will it be punished for the mistakes made by the parents. This child is accepted as part of the wider family, and often family members join to provide help.

Therefore, the use of the term "illegitimate" is rarely used. It is also important that we note that not all black single mothers are intimately involved in dense and supportive extended family networks. We must not let the positive characteristic of black extended families become a stereotype that all black families will be supportive of single mothers. Not all single mothers even have families, nor do all live in close proximity to them, nor are all families in a financial or emotional position to provide help to young mothers.

Very little well-designed empirical research has been conducted on black families. Therefore, one must be careful in accepting many of the conclusions that may be expressed about our families. It is sometimes difficult to separate the biases and personal experiences of the family experts from the hard data that will support their conclusions. My recent study of over 300 single black fully employed mothers of young children who reside in Baltimore, Md., is one of the few available studies on this subject.

I wanted to find out the characteristics of women in this status who were attempting to be self-supporting while caring for their own children. These were the survivors. I felt that if we could understand how these women coped, we could make better recommendations for other women. Over half of the women were divorced, and almost half had never been married; 37 percent were receiving some level of support from the father of the children; 46 percent were teens when they first gave birth, and 73 percent were not married at that time. As a group, I found the women to be working extremely hard to maintain themselves and their children. They were under tremendously intense stress.

Clinical studies have shown that such stress can be found to be related to later emotional or physical illness.

The highest ranked sources of stress were from, one, finances; two, housing; and three, work related concerns, all related to their financial stress.

They were very concerned with the lack of child care for infants and young children and for the lack of adult supervision for children who were too old for child care. They were worried about the school achievement of their children, and they worried that they did not have the time to work with the schools.

The women suffered from what we call role overload. They were trying to be all things to too many people: their children, their employers, and their friends and relatives. They were allowing their own personal needs to go unmet. They were simply exhausted. Women who were under the greatest stress received more support from their support networks in the form of emotional support, child care, and financial help. They talked almost daily to their family confidant, and they felt that they had more relatives upon whom they could call for help.

Highly stressed mothers were significantly higher in religiousity than those that were lower in stress. The church and the family were continuing to provide their traditional supports.

Mothers who were under low stress were those who were most satisfied with their family situation and who felt positive about the amount of contact they had with close relatives. They tended to have higher self-esteem and to feel that they had a greater mastery over their environment. Women felt that they were better parents when they had a variety of networks to depend upon.

Based upon these findings, there are recommendations that can be made.

One, any policy recommendations must be based as closely as possible on empirical data and not upon faulty images or stereotypes that may be held about black single parent families.

Two, economic security is more important for effective parenting than the actual presence or absence or absence of any one parent. To help, child support payments will need to be made legally available to more women at greater than present levels. Enforcement of the collection of these payments must be increased. Funds can now be obtained from the father's taxes and wages to repay States for welfare payments. Similar procedures need to be started to provide basic support directly to their families. Escalation clauses for support should be tied into father's future earnings.

Three, the income of single mothers would be enhanced if they were paid wages equal to that paid men for the same positions.

Four, the productivity of these women would be increased and thus their value to their employers would be enhanced if flexible work schedules were made available in order to allow them to meet their parenting responsibilities; if adequate quality child care was made available from infancy through the older ages. Job training programs should be made available to prepare women and their older children for the more technological jobs of the future. Young black men must be given training so they may obtain jobs and be able to assume their roles as fathers and husbands.

Family life education should be offered at all levels. Adolescents should be presented with a realistic view of the single parenting stress.

And six, policies that are made should reinforce and not disrupt the existing supportive networks of the family and other community institutions that have been found to be helpful for the mothers.

These programs can be made compatible with the diversity of religious and ethnic values that exist in our communities.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Dr. McAdoo.

Dr. Duncan, you state that more than one-half of the white women who separated or divorced in the late sixties had remarried within 5 years. And the comparable fraction for black women was 17 percent. As I remember a related thing, I think it was an average of just a few years between white women's divorce and remarriage and something like 17-percent average for blacks.

To what do you attribute this startling difference in remarriage rates between white and black women? And I ask Dr. McAdoo to make any comments she might have. And I would say at the outset that I have seen—and I said this yesterday, Dr. McAdoo—the most inspiring examples of the extended family at work with compassion and effectiveness and sacrifice in the black community.

And I admire and respect that very much. I also recognize that the country came through several hundred years in which black people were slaves, and I think that we have not succeeded yet in eliminating prejudice from ocean to ocean and border to border, in that respect. That has something to do with the economic problem that black people face still, the increased economic problems relative to white people.

There are other answers than cradle to grave federal support, and maybe they lie in some of those fields. Those are my observations. But would you, either of you care to comment on the question, why more than one-half of the whites had remarried within 5 years, and only 17 percent of black women had.

I would invite either of you to comment on that.

Ms. McAdoo. I think the census data would indicate that for white women who are single parents, whether they are single because they are divorced or the birth of a baby out of wedlock, their single status is a transitional stage. For 2 or 3 years you can anticipate that they will get married or remarried.

Now, what happens for the black woman, this tends to be a permanent situation, and the reason is—well, there are two. One is the economic level of the income of the black male who is unable to assume the responsibility of the family. And the other one that is often overlooked is the imbalance of the sex ratio within the black community within the age that most people become married.

In other words, there are more women—simply there are more women than there are men. Even if every man remarried, there still would be many single women who would be unable to marry for that reason alone.

Senator Denton. Is that something that has been pervasive over time, or is it just a generational phenomenon?

Ms. McAdoo. I think this has been for some time. This is also made more difficult by the high incarceration rate for young black males between the ages of 18 and 25.

Senator Denton. Which in turn could be related.

Ms. McAdoo. Related to single parenting, yes.

Senator Denton. How about you, Dr. Duncan, do you have any remarks on that?

Mr. Duncan. I am an economist by training, and I think many of these differences lie beyond the economic realm. I think it is important to note what do not seem to be important. And in that regard, the evidence that we have on the lack of effect of the transfer income programs is important to note.

It does not seem to be that there is much consistent evidence that delay in remarriage can be attributed to the level of welfare benefits.

Senator Denton. How about of economic status in general, which is what Dr. McAdoo maintains?

Mr. Duncan. I beg your pardon?

Senator Denton. She said that the slowness was related to two things: the economic level of the male and the imbalance of the genders in that marriage age group.

Mr. Duncan. Yes. It is certainly true that——

Senator DENTON. But you implied that it was not connected with welfare payments.

Mr. DUNCAN. That is right.

Senator DENTON. I understand that.

Mr. DUNCAN. That is right.

Senator DENTON. You said that in your statement.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes.

Senator DENTON. Now, we are trying to explain the difference.

Mr. DUNCAN. It is certainly true that economic position of black men that are available partners for the black women is considerably lower. But I would not know what causal role that would play.

Senator DENTON. And you, Dr. McAdoo, have concluded that it is a cause.

Ms. MCADOO. Yes.

Senator DENTON. What are the comparable marriage rates among divorced men?

Ms. MCADOO. I do not know the exact statistics, but it is much higher for black men after divorce.

Senator DENTON. Well, that would indicate that they have no hesitation to remarry someone else at the same economic level and would seem to indicate a propensity for being fickle, maybe, or what?

Ms. MCADOO. No, I think it is the imbalance of sex ratio. Again, they remarry, but you have the surplus of women between the ages of 18 and 35. And these are the ones with the young children.

Senator DENTON. But nonethless—I do not mean to be contentious—but, you know, even for a white man there is an infinite number of women out there all the time, and he is either staying married or not. I do not believe there is any shortage of women on the white side for the fellow to remarry. He is remarrying early, but he is—I do not know. It just seemed to me that that was not——

Ms. MCADOO. Well, one of the reasons of getting married, usually—especially when a child is born out of wedlock, in addition to giving the child a name, is to provide financial security to the mother and the young baby.

With the very high level of unemployment of young black males, marriage would not indicate future security for the mother or the child. Often it would mean that the mother of the child would have an additional burden. So the marriage for financial security is an explanation we often cannot take advantage of because single parent status poverty, as you indicated, will be prevented for the most part by remarriage because the woman when she is married and working is only going to earn one-third of the family income.

Senator DENTON. You mentioned that adolescents should be made distinctly aware of the economic risks associated with bearing children out of wedlock.

Ms. MCADOO. Yes.

Senator DENTON. How would you see the application of that admonition?

Ms. MCADOO. Well, one way would be through family life education classes early, not just in the high school, but the elementary and junior high schools.

Senator DENTON. How would you define family life education?

Ms. McAdoo. Providing experiences with financial planning, financial managing; the idea that having a baby is more than a doll, but it is a major, longtime, 20-year commitment; that—also I think I would make young married couples who may be having marital discord realistically face the consequences of what will happen in their divorce.

Senator Denton. I do not disagree with any of that. All federally funded adolescent pregnancy programs up until 1981 were simply issuing contraceptives, and providing sex counseling and from what I have seen of the information supplied, not that full of advice of the type you are talking about.

Would you want to see that type of advice emphasized in the counseling, rather than just issuing contraceptives and providing recourse to abortion as the way to avoid the consequences of pregnancy?

Ms. McAdoo. I think you need both types, both effective family planning and financial management.

Senator Denton. Financial management.

Ms. McAdoo. Yes.

Senator Denton. Yes.

Let me see, Dr. Duncan, you say that in 1973, 5 percent of all divorced or separated white women and 16 percent of all divorced or separated black women were receiving welfare. How do those figures compare to the percentage of nondivorced, nonseparated women who receive welfare?

Mr. Duncan. Well, they are considerably higher. It is 1 percent for married white women and 6 percent for married black women.

Senator Denton. Thank you, sir. You say on page 3 and you have stated and reiterated in your oral statements that there is little consistent evidence that AFDC payments are a factor in promoting divorce or in preventing remarriage. Do the data uniformly show that there is no link between AFDC and the failure of single parents to marry or to stay married, or would you say there is room for debate on that point?

Could you provide for the record a list of citations of what you consider to be the major studies on both sides of that argument?

Mr. Duncan. The findings in this regard are by no means certain, and indeed in the article that I list in the bibliography by Bishop, there is a review of much of this evidence, as there is in the reference by Lane. It is very difficult to test for the effect of welfare payments. The problem is that one would like to compare a world in which there were welfare payments to a world in which there were no welfare payments, but the latter world simply does not exist.

All States have welfare to a certain extent. And so what the social scientist must do is to simply compare States with relatively low benefit levels to States with relatively high benefit levels. And as I say, there have been numerous attempts to test for that. Some find some effects; other studies that use the same data but a slightly different version of the test find no effects.

So this conclusion is very tentative. But it is the current state of thought about the nature of that evidence.

Senator Denton. Thank you, sir.

Dr. McAdoo, you may have answered this partially, but why does a single parent have so much more of problem in the black community than the white?

Ms. McAdoo. Well, some of the research that has been done at Johns Hopkins does give us some indication of the reasons. One of the faulty assumptions was that the young mothers, as you mentioned earlier, were having the babies to receive AFDC payments, and they found this was not——

Senator Denton. Excuse me. I could not hear that.

Ms. McAdoo. That one of the stereotypes about the high level of out of wedlock births, specially for adolescents, was that the young girls or the mothers were having them to receive transfer payments. Studies by Frank Furstenberg at Johns Hopkins found that the real reason was that the mothers were simply ignorant of the reproductive process. They were not receiving adequate preventative health care, and if they had been able to receive the health care, they would have been able to know more about their bodies and family planning information.

So the mothers were not having babies to receive welfare. They were having babies because of ignorance.

Senator Denton. So, in your opinion, they just need more birth control information?

Ms. McAdoo. No. My opinion would be that they need more economic security because if you look at the income levels of different groups, both blacks and white, and as the families move up in income level, there is very little difference by the time you get to middle class status on the out-of-wedlock ratio or level of black and white girls. In other words, it is directly related to economics.

Family planning information in and of itself is not the whole picture. If the family had adequate financial resources, then they would be able to see a doctor; then the girl would be able to receive information.

Senator Denton. Do you think that the average black adolescent who becomes pregnant or the average black woman who divorces is aware of the grim likelihood of poverty that you presented? You have indicated that you do not think so and that we need more——

Ms. McAdoo. I think they are aware of the poverty, but they may not realize how pervasive it is and how long term it will be. The black woman does not have the anticipation that a man will come along and rescue her.

Senator Denton. Yesterday, for your information, I offered the example of a priest out in Chicago, black, who has a program called "One Church, One Child" to try to dig into the problem of the black community having so many abandoned children or neglected children or single-parent children who could be adopted; and the remarkable beginning of that program in which, I believe, on the first Sunday that he outlined the program to his own parish church, resulted in 17 children being adopted.

I have been trying to help him get that around the country. But there is the remaining fact that adoption, while apparently much more is needed, is practiced much more rarely in the black community.

Why would you say that is the case?

Ms. McAdoo. Well, those statistics would be accurate only for formal adoptions. We have had a pattern of informal adoptions within the extended family, within the church community, for generations. What has happened is that many of the agencies have not been setting up programs that have been supportive of the families.

So the point that we have more abandoned children may not be totally accurate. We have more informally adopted children. If you look at the HHS data on adoption level, there is no differentiation according to race.

Senator Denton. You do not think we have more black children who are not properly attended, whether they are informally or formally adopted?

Ms. McAdoo. You will have more because of the poverty level, but if you control for poverty and look across class, you will find identical records as far as the actual formal adoption rate.

Senator Denton. Why do black adolescents so rarely put their children up for adoption? Of unwed teenagers, 97 percent have retained their children rather than, as in previous decades, put them up for adoption.

Why do black adolescents so rarely do it?

Ms. McAdoo. Well, there tends to be a very strong cultural bias or a belief that the child is a part of the family; therefore, you would not put a family member up. It would be seen as abandoning a family member. The other reason is because the agencies have not been tuned in up to now to develop placements, adoptive home placement. Parents and young mothers have known that if they put a child up, the chances are the child will remain in foster care for probably their whole childhood.

And the preference then would be to try to adopt the child within the family, within the church, or within even the neighborhood, rather than putting a child in foster care.

Senator Denton. This is perhaps beyond the purview of your own observations or research, but you do say that the black community does not casually accept teen pregnancies and that the influence of the traditional church is still strong. There seems to be a contradiction there. Do you find a great deal of attention being given to the issue by black churches in preaching against premarital sexual activity, for example?

Ms. McAdoo. Yes. Many of the churches and especially the more traditional churches are very fundamental in their beliefs about premarital sex and out-of-wedlock birth. However, there is a very strong sense of frustration because of the lack of economic resources to be able to work with that problem.

There is a great deal of concern about the very high level of out-of-wedlock birth. It is one out of two in Washington. In Baltimore last year, 7 out of every 10 black children were born out of wedlock. This is of great concern, but there is, as I said, the frustration of what to do. Many churches have set up programs for mothers. They have set up teenage support type groups.

But the churches and many of the small social organizations themselves are under stress, economic stress. So they have only limited resources in order to address this issue.

Senator Denton. But there has been a rather marked increase, as I recall the figures from the Census Bureau, in the illegitimate birth rates among blacks, while there has been a drop in poverty among them. That would see to contradict your rationale.

Ms. McAdoo. Well, there has been an increase of out-of-wedlock births, but we think that is directly related to economics.

Senator Denton. But, as I say, there are less in poverty. The number in poverty has gone down while the illegitimate pregnancy rate has gone startlingly up.

Ms. McAdoo. Well, the Census Bureau people may know the statistics better. I do not think the poverty level has decreased in the black community.

Senator Denton. Well, even allowing for great error, it has not been along the curve that the illegitimacy rate has gone.

Ms. McAdoo. You are right at that.

Senator Denton. How does the influence of the church carry over into attitudes in the black community toward abortion, especially since you emphasized the fundamentalist churches which are 100 percent opposed to abortion.

Ms. McAdoo. You will find a great deal of diversity of attitudes toward abortion. Some are very much against abortion. Some are very much in favor. So you have to be very careful not——

Senator Denton. This is the churches which you are referring to?

Ms. McAdoo. The churches themselves. Many of the fundamental—as I say, the fundamental churches have very traditional antiabortion attitudes. Others are very proabortion.

Senator Denton. Thank you, Dr. McAdoo. And thank you, Dr. Duncan. We appreciate very much your time and the valuable testimony you have given us this morning.

Ms. McAdoo. Thank you.

Senator Denton. On our next panel we have Rev. George Hall from the counseling center at Truro Episcopal Church in Fairfax, Va.; Ms. Connie Mallett, president of Parents Without Partners; and Dr. Harold M. Voth, chief of staff, Veterans' Administration Medical Center, Topeka, Kans.

We will proceed from my left to right, so Reverend Hall, will you proceed. I understand you will discuss the stresses you find in couples considering divorce are experiencing, focusing on whether resolving conflict tends to have a preferable effect on a person's well-being as compared to the effect of divorce.

STATEMENTS OF GEORGE W. HALL, JR., COUNSELING CENTER, TRURO EPISCOPAL CHURCH, FAIRFAX, VA.; CONNIE MALLETT, PRESIDENT, PARENTS WITHOUT PARTNERS, INC.; AND HAROLD M. VOTH, CHIEF OF STAFF, VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL CENTER, TOPEKA, KANS.

Mr. Hall. Thank you for the opportunity of speaking to you and for your concern about a fact of life that affects a major portion of this country.

We know from psychological and spiritual studies that divorce produces stress impact on the human system that is exceeded only in the ferocity of the stress itself by the death of a loved one. We know that the occurrence of such a traumatic event will produce in many instances a major physical or emotional disorder within the person experiencing this amount of stress within 12 to 18 months from the date of the event.

Divorce is a problem of epidemic proportions in this country today with the startling fact that in the general population one out of every two marriages ends in divorce within 6 years. Now, this 6-year period is an average with some shorter and some longer. The statistic amongst the Christian community is 1 out of 2.3 marriages, not significantly different from the general population. However, amongst the population which is centered is a Scripture reading, praying family, the divorce rate is only 1 divorce out of every 1,105 marriages.

Senator DENTON. Would you mention the words in that category again. I couldn't hear. Among whom now?

Mr. HALL. Among those families which are into a posture of daily Scripture reading, praying together as a family, couples sharing together as husband and wife, the divorce rate is only 1 in every 1,105 marriages.

Senator DENTON. Those who pray together stay together.

Mr. HALL. That is right.

America has become a country with a highly mobile lifestyle over the past 100 years. This has contributed to the scattering of the extended family and a loss of an emotional support base by a newly married couple. Another factor is the prevalent thought among many young people that someone will put their finger on a button in a moment of panic and the world will disintegrate. So let us live for today without commitment to the future. These are all factors for a couple's lack of commitment to themselves and to each other.

I know from my own counseling experience extending over the past 25 years and thousands of hours of therapeutic activity with couples and individuals that the leading cause of marital discord and breakup is the lack of good communication between the spouses. It has been pointed out in studies that couples will come together in the Masters and Johnson program and easily talk about sexual activity; but it is almost impossible to get anybody to answer the question, what about your prayer life? Do you pray together? They simply revolt and say that is too personal a question to be answered.

It takes hours of therapy to reintegrate the individuals involved. This involves the removal and healing of the pain associated with the shattering of a lifestyle and its attendant hopes, desires, and dreams, and promises.

It also involves what I would like to refer to as phantom pain.

Senator DENTON. As what, sir?

Mr. HALL. Phantom pain. This is the pain that is associated with the anatomical loss of a part of the human body. In divorce a part of our image of ourselves is lost and we have to adjust to it. I can speak to this both professionally and personally, because I have been through it. I do know that those marriages are the strongest which have been through this baptism of fire and have established open, effective channels of communication between themselves and our Creator, God.

Conflict resolution is not easy. And learning to share oneself personally with God, and with each other is not, either, but it is in the knowing of the other that our own understanding of ourselves is fully found.

It is in open communication that a couple, and each of them separately can look at divorce as a viable option and in saying no to it, that a true marriage may be found; because each of them are in it because they want to be and not because they have to be.

Thank you.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Reverend Hall. And we will retain your statements for future use. It is not often that the existence or importance of God and our relations with Him are brought up. I only hope that we will not all be sued under the establishment of religion clause by not shushing you.

Ms. Mallett, would you proceed.

Ms. MALLETT. Yes, sir. Good morning.

I would like to take the opportunity first to express my appreciation for being allowed to testify about single parents before the Senate Subcommittee on Family and Human Services. I am from Novi, Michigan. I am the president of Parents Without Partners, Inc., which is a nonprofit organization, 214,000 single parents of all types, the separated, the divorced, the widowed, the never married, custodial and noncustodial. And I want to emphasize that our members must be parents.

In the past 26 years we have grown from one chapter in New York City to more than 1,100 chapters in all 50 States and Canada.

We also have affiliates in England, Australia, and Germany. When our organization began in 1957, single parents were outsiders in our society. Our founders felt the need for a mutual support organization that would accomplish two things: First, it would give single parents a haven where they could take their children and meet with other parents in the same situation; second, it would educate others about what single parenting is really like.

These goals tie in with two of the major problems that single parents face: Stress and the negative attitudes of society. Parents Without Partners cannot provide help with the third major problem that single parents face, and that is poverty. We cannot provide child support enforcement, job training, child care, and jobs that would ease the financial strain on single parents, a problem we believe has reached crisis proportions.

Only the wealthy are untouched economically when a death or an unplanned pregnancy or a divorce creates a single-parent family. But most financial problems become almost solely the province of single mothers who care for 90 percent of the children.

A single mother's median income is $9,068 a year. Single custodial fathers have 10 percent of the children and a median income of $19,437 a year, an income more than double the income of the mothers.

So when we talk about single parents and poverty, we are talking about the women, widowed, divorced, never married, who have custody of most of the children. Of the three types of single parents, the widowed are most likely to have a financial cushion because assets stay within the family. They are likely to have life insurance and social security assistance for minor children is available.

But among our widowed members we find that a particularly difficult crunch comes when it is time for the children to go to college. This is aggravated by the recent loss of college social security benefits. Widows make up about 8 percent of all female single parents.

Never married mothers have the most difficult financial problem. They are more likely to be young; 41 percent of births outside marriage in 1980 were to teenagers, as opposed to 59 percent who were adults. Their children are younger, making it more difficult for them to work. They are less likely to receive child support from the father.

The problems faced by all single parents are distilled when it comes to this group, which makes up about 24.5 percent of all female single parents when you include subfamilies in the population. It is worth noting that they face a catastrophic unemployment rate of 28.1 percent.

The divorced and separated comprise 67.2 percent of single mothers. You would suppose that with the amount of change in divorce laws recently that these mothers would be somewhat more protected when they become single parents, but the reality is that divorced and separated mothers usually experience a drastic drop in income.

A recent study by Dr. Lenore J. Weitzman in California shows that the typical divorcing couple is young and not very well off. They have been married fewer than 10 years. They have a net worth of only $11,000, and an income between $10,000 and $20,000 a year.

But 1 year after divorce, the fathers experience a 42-percent improvement in income, while the mothers experience a 73-percent loss of income. Dr. Weitzman explains this as a result of four factors: the needs of the father decline after divorce because he is no longer sharing costs incurred by his wife and children; child support and alimony payments do not usually increase with inflation, but the salaries of divorced fathers do; the burden of providing for the children usually falls on the mother, increasing the goods and services she needs to buy; and her child support usually does not amount to half the cost of raising the children.

The amount and the enforcement of child support payments are part of the financial problem. For example, we know of one divorced mother of two children who spends 58 percent of her income on housing and utilities alone. After her car payment and other debts, she has $239 a month to spend on telephone, gas, insurance, medical care, food, and clothing for her children. Her court-ordered child support of $230 a month would help her avoid the frantic juggling and scrimping, but her husband has not paid it for 2 years. He earns $60 a month more than she does and sees no reason why he should pay since their salaries are nearly equal. Obviously, he thinks children live on air.

Ironically the woman, this particular woman I am talking about, works for the Office of Child Support Enforcement in the Washington area.

In the most recent study of child support completed by the Bureau of the Census, only 48 percent of women caring for minor children were awarded and entitled to child support. On about three-fourths of these women receive any payment, and only about one-half receive full payment. That is about 24 women out of every 100 women raising children alone.

The average child support payment is $1,800 a year, but the average payment to women in poverty is $1,090 a year. Women who are white, educated, and divorced, are more likely to receive the support. Those who do receive support are also more likely to work because the support makes up for the low wages.

The second major financial problem faced by female single parents is that they are less likely to have an education or job-related skills that will help them make a good living when they find themselves the primary breadwinner. The single parent I mentioned before already receives probably the highest salary a woman without a college degree can get in the area.

Again, according to the Bureau of the Census, only about 9 percent of single mothers have college degrees, as opposed to 24 percent of primary breadwinners in the two parent families. One explanation for this is that women are more likely than men to have interrupted their educations for marriage and raising children.

Sometimes they even sacrifice for years to put their husbands through school. Even when this is not the case, I find it sad but true that any woman who follows the old rules, staying home with their children, is punished for doing so if she later becomes a single parent. When she tries to enter the work force, she is less able to compete. She is less educated. She is inexperienced. She is unskilled. Only 17 percent of single mothers are in professional, technical, administrative, or managerial fields, compared to 36 percent of all men who have families with children.

It is not easy for a single parent to go to night school or get specialized job training. Tuition, no matter how low, is beyond the means of most single parents who are trying to figure out how to buy sneakers for their children. Most Government job training programs take place during the day, and therefore are out of reach for many single parents who want to work rather than go on welfare.

The desperate mother with children to feed whose husband has walked out and is paying little or no child support must grab a job, any kind of a job just to keep going. So single mothers must often sell themselves short in the job market, and since only 14 percent of all divorced women are awarded any alimony, and only two-thirds of this group receive it, a period of rehabilitation after divorce is a myth for most women.

Many employers do not want to hire women who have children at home because they fear a mother might take off too much time to be with her children when they are ill or when they have problems at school.

Discrimination against women is illegal. Discrimination against parents is not. In truth, single parents make excellent employees because they need their jobs desperately and they will work hard to keep them. But all too often the single parent cannot assure employers that her children are well cared for while she is working. Only about 7.7 million daycare slots exist in this country for the approximately 13 million children under age 13 whose parents work.

The children of single parents count for about 42 percent of these children. And daycare is enormously expensive. Single parents have to compete for daycare slots against the two income couples who have more money for daycare. One in five unemployed women is out of work because she cannot find adequate care for her children.

Paying for child care, if she can find it, is often the straw that breaks the camel's back for the single parent. We call it the daycare hump. It is a cost of working the single parent must pay or else sacrifice her children's safety. In fact, daycare assistance cutbacks have been the single most painful cut our working single parents have had to face.

One mother in Delaware was forced to leave school where she was studying accounting and computers because of daycare cuts. Now she works for the minimum wage in a shirt factory. Another mother in Kansas leaves her children in her car in the parking lot while she works.

Mr. Senator, helping with job training and daycare is giving a hand up so the single parent will not have to take a handout. Most single parents want to work and be self-sufficient. The labor force participation rate for single mothers is 67.7 percent. While it is true that 90 percent of families receiving public assistance are headed by single parents, it is also true that the average length of stay on aid for families with dependent children is only 2 years. That suggests to us that the majority of the welfare population needs this program to deal with the crisis and then go on to the working world.

Only 4 years ago one of the officers in our organization was a welfare mother. After 17 years of marriage, two children, a successful business, and an income of $40,000 a year, her husband left and never paid any child support, alimony, or turned over any property. Because she had never worked during her marriage, her skills were obsolete. Finally, to feed the children, she went to her welfare office. She was placed in the WIN program and sent to business school. Her grant was $367 a month, not enough for her to live on, so she worked part time as a Kelly girl, keeping $110 under the $30-and-a-third rule.

Her children were placed in a before and after school center, and she clothed them by participating in a Parents Without Partners clothing exchange. When she graduated, she was lucky enough to land a union clerical job with the railroad and now earns $23,000 a year.

She says she felt ashamed while she was on welfare, and she also says it saved her life.

She is luckier than most single mothers. The unemployment rate for single mothers is higher than for any other family head at 12.9 percent. For single mothers of children under 6, it is a heartbreaking 18.9 percent. When they find work, most of them will not be very well off, because the median income for working single mothers is only $11,800 a year. That is not much to raise children on.

The stresses stem from more than financial reasons alone. Most single parents never expected to land in this situation. No one ever gets married thinking the marriage will not work out. Death is, of course, not the fault of the parent left behind. Divorce, as well, is often a surprise. We have many members who believed they were doing well in their marriages, who tried to be good spouses and parents, and who were left through no fault of their own.

Senator DENTON. Ms. Mallett, excuse me. Your testimony is extremely interesting and relevant, but every other witness has abided by the time. I will ask you to try to summarize the rest of your testimony in just a couple of minutes. We will have all the written part in the record and ask you questions about it in writing, if not orally.

Ms. MALLETT. Yes, sir.

Let me go on then to stereotyping, the stereotyping of single parents. As if these problems are not bad enough, as I have talked about the stress and economics, you suddenly find that your place in society and how people perceive you have changed. When you were married and your children had problems in school, they simply had problems in school. Now that you are a single parent and your children have problems in school, it is because they are from a broken home.

Now that you are single, you are suddenly considered fair game by the opposite sex. You may have been out of the social scene for years; you may not be interested in dating yet, but our members tell us they are approached by the opposite sex as though somehow they have become less respectable and open to solicitation.

If you stayed in your old neighborhood, you may be ostracized by your neighbors. Not only are they often uncomfortable with what has happened, sometimes they will not even let their children play with yours.

We are told by the media every day that our homes are broken ones, and this is the final point I want to make to you, Mr. Senator: The broken home image is such a negative one that it only harms, not helps, the single parent family. Even when two parents are not living together, the children still have a mother. They still have a father, and they still have a home.

Sometimes they even have two loving homes. Since our organization was founded, it has objected to the term broken home. We believe that families are forever, no matter how they are rearranged, and that the number of parents in the home does not determine the quality of the family. Despite the many, many problems single parents have, they can be overcome, and a single parent family can become a strong and a healthy family.

Ask our members who live with an abusive or alcoholic spouse for years which is the better way to live. Ask the children of our members who watch their parents fight which way they want to live. Ask the children still living in two-parent homes where there is unhappiness, hostility, alcoholism, and abuse if the two-parent home is always whole. We have never said and we will never say that there is anything wrong with marriage or that a harmonious two-parent home is not a preferable style of life.

But someone has got to speak out for the many single parent families who do finally overcome poverty, stress, and stereotyping, and someone has got to speak out for those who are still struggling.

We find that it takes about 2 to 3 years for widows, divorcees, and never married mothers to stop feeling like second class citizens. And when they stop feeling this way, they start feeling good.

They can adjust to a new style of life. Good jobs are important. Support systems are important. Positive self image is important.

Single parents can find new strengths and capabilities, and their children can find a capacity for greater understanding and responsibility. We have many parents among our members who maintain happy, strong homes with happy, strong children who do well in school and will do well in life.

So we are indeed happy to be here before you today. There are hundreds of experts in this country, doctors, lawyers, therapists, economists, social workers, who talk about single parent families.

But we are the single parents, and we are the only ones who can tell you what it is like. Thank you for asking us.

[The questions along with responses of Ms. Mallett follow:]

Parents Without Partners, Inc.

An international non-profit, non-sectarian educational organization
devoted to the welfare and interests of single parents and their children

April 22, 1983

The Honorable Jeremiah Denton
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Denton:

We are glad to have the opportunity to answer the additional questions you have asked about causes, effects, and possible remedies to the family breakdown crisis.

The first question you asked was whether our members who chose to be divorced feel regret, or that they perhaps did not realize before divorce the gravity of the consequences. The answer to this is no. Most members of Parents Without Partners are people who are anguished by the pain of divorce. Many of our members were divorced through no fault of their own. Others who did choose to divorce usually did so because they suffered one or several oppressions in their marriages. There may have been spouse or child abuse, alchohol/and or drug abuse, infidelity, or mental abuse. Sometimes there is a questioning of whether they should have tried harder or done something different in the marriage. But the vast majority, as they think back over their married lives, conclude that they are better off without the strains we mention above. Again, people who lightly choose to divorce without serious reasons do not tend to join our organization, because they do not need the mutual support we offer.

The second question concerned improving the collection of child support payments. There are many things in this area that could be done. The greatest problem in child support enforcement is the laws differ from state to state, so that it is easy for deadbeat parents to escape one state's laws. Even with the interstate child support enforcement procedures that we have (URESA), it is necessary that new cases are opened in each state with new judges and new support orders.

We would suggest that it be a federal right for each child to be supported by both parents. If the right to child support were a federal one, each state could be required to have certain enforcement procedures in place: (1) Each state should honor child support orders from other states; (2) Arrearages, which are accumulations of owed child support, should be made permanent for all but the most exceptional circumstances. At present, it is common for arrearages to be eliminated or cut down by judges, who do not see child support as an important debt; (3) Each state should permit wage attachments and wage liens for both ongoing child support and arrearages. At present such laws are a hodge-podge, entirely absent in some states and only partially present under certain circumstances in others; (4) Attorney's fees ought to be

International Office 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20814 (301) 654-8850

charged to the losing party; that is, the non-paying parent should bear the costs of the plaintiff's attorneys fees and court costs (after all, the plaintiff is the one who needs money) and if the case is frivolous and the absent parent is not at fault, the plaintiff would pay; (5) Each state ought to use the new, accurate blood test that can establish paternity almost 100 percent correctly.

Also, the federal tax refund intercept program on behalf of child support arrearages ought to be broadened to help non-welfare parents, so that they don't have to go on welfare.

Your third question asked us to identify the leading cause of the divorce rate today, and what has happened in the past to make this problem so serious for women. We would identify two leading causes of divorce today.

The first is that our society in recent decades has encouraged young people to romanticize marriage without educating them as to its realities. When financial problems and the toughness of the parenting job crop up, marriage may seem to lose its "romance." Sometimes wives leave, but more often it seems that men leave or commit adultery in their search for romance, and the wives are left behind with the financial problems and the raising of the children. We would advise marriage education programs.

The second cause is that women are no longer willing to be treated as though they had little worth as persons by their husbands. At one time, when we were building our country, wives were by necessity equal partners in building lives. But when wives cease to be seen as equal, there is a tendancy for them to be belittled, not only by society at large, but by their husbands. This kind of inequality makes it more likely that wives can be abused both mentally and physically. Again, since most women keep the children after divorce, and since as women they earn only 59 cents to every dollar earned by men, they have a hard time supporting the children. And it is ironic that some husbands seem to believe after divorce that their ex-wives have become more than equal, and that the wives should bear all the costs of raising the children.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Connie Mallett

Connie Mallett
International President
Parents Without Partners, Inc.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Ms. Mallett.

Dr. Voth?

Dr. VOTH. Senator Denton, I appreciate being here and having the opportunity to testify.

Senator DENTON. Let us take this opportunity, Dr. Voth, to congratulate you publicly in this hearing for the record for your recent receipt of the Legion of Merit Award for your efforts to solve the drug abuse problem in the Navy and Marine Corps.

Dr. VOTH. Thank you.

I am a physician with about 30 years experience in psychiatry and psychoanalysis, and I speak from that base. The disintegration of the family in the United States is a crisis of the greatest possible magnitude. This phenomenon with all of the consequences poses a greater threat to our society than any other.

Our economic, energy, and social problems are related to the family crisis, but many of these matters can be solved by strong, wise, and intelligent leaders. However, if the disintegration of the family life for children does not cease, the very quality of our people will change.

Senator, I do not think it is generally understood how extensive are the consequences for both the individual strengths of people, their vitality, their productiveness, and society generally, and the consequences of the breakup of the home for these matters.

These changed people and the values they live by will alter our way of life beyond recognition in time. If present trends continue for another generation or two or three, the United States, I believe, will fold in on itself. All our external and internal adversaries need to do is wait patiently.

Divorce has profound effects on developing children and on the couple itself. These effects are both immediate and long term. The immediate effects are associated with the stress and consequences of attachment and loss. The long-term effects have to do with developmental consequences and the longer term effects of stress due to loss.

On the surface there appears to be more serious consequences for children who are still developing rapidly, but there are developmental and maturational consequences for adults as well. The attachments within a family are generally quite strong; more so in some than in others, of course. Not only is there a strong bonding among the family members, but also to the larger whole, the family unit itself and to the members of the extended family, grandparents, obviously. These family bonds are probably the strongest known to man. Of the many consequences of these attachments, the complex bondedness within the family, none is more important than the psychological developmental effects each member has on the other.

It has long been recognized that a good man brings out the best in a woman, and that a good woman brings out the best in a man, that children bring out the best in both. No other class of stimulii are more important to the psychological development of children than two parents who love each other, are bonded to each other, and who are committed to their children.

The greater whole, the family itself, brings out the best in all of its members. One of the great discoveries in medicine has been the unmistakable, illness producing effect of so-called object loss; that is, a breaking of attachments and their subsequent loss.

A wide range of physical and psychological illnesses, and even including cancer, have been observed to be the consequences of attachment and subsequent loss. Associated with such losses is a profound sense of defeat and a winding down of the individual's vitality. These observations have been made clinically for well over 100 years, and through more formal research, during the past 35 or 40 or so.

Some physicians rank the stress of loss through divorce second only to the loss through death of loved ones. Predictably, a wide spectrum of physical and psychological illnesses develop following such losses. The loss in vitality to the society and the personal suffering of men and women who undergo the awful wrench of divorce and its sequelae defies estimation.

It would be impossible to quantify the consequences of the broken dreams, the happy family times that cease to be, the absence of that marvelous sense of warmth and security, which an in tact family provides, the loss in national productivity, and the health care costs, as well as the economic consequences we have been hearing about caused by the psychophysiologic reaction to stress of broken object attachments and the subsequent developmental consequences.

To love and to be loved are powerful, vitalizing forces. And to be once burned makes many people twice shy. Our society is comprised of millions of people who live emotionally impoverished lives because they do not again wish to experience the trauma of a major loss.

Many who have divorced marry again, and they do form good marriages, but many marry in name only. They put a good outward face on their marriage, but they never reestablish the intensity of what can be achieved and may once have been achieved for them.

It is alarming to speculate on how much more these millions of people could contribute to life if they began each day full of the zest which derives from happy family life.

A not so obvious consequence of divorce is the slowed or stalled psychological growth that results from the detachment among family members. Excluding those marriages which should never have occurred in the first place, most of the strife between married couples and the discontent, anxiety, or other symptoms which occur in the family are expressions of the maturational struggles within the various family members, the parents in particular.

It is easier to run away from situations distress rather than endure, master those situations, and mature in the process. Psychological growth tends to slow or even cease as couples disengage. Maturation may continue for some from biological imperatives from within and from environmental demands, to be true, but when the family breaks up, some of life's most powerful maturational stimulii are denied the former married couple and their children.

Even worse than slowed or stalled psychological growth are the various expressions of the psychological retrogressions which may result following divorce. Some of these conditions derive from bitterness, loneliness, idle time, but most result from the stress of loss referred to earlier. Individuals turn to drugs, alcohol, aberrant and self-destructive lifestyles, including sometimes a succession of transient, largely meaningless relationships.

Overt psychiatric illnesses develop in some. Some die sooner through, quote, "natural" causes, and some commit suicide.

One-half the marriages in the United States are projected to end in divorce. Some of these are second and third marriages. This projected divorce rate is a barometer of a profound disturbance in the human condition. It is not a passing phase, in my judgment. The biologic imperatives to mate are powerful. People will continue to marry. But the psychologic health and maturity which is necessary to make the heterosexual bond durable and lasting is worsening. The perils to the individual and to our society are staggering.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement along with questions and responses of Mr. Voth follow:]

THE BROKEN FAMILY: EFFECTS ON WOMEN AND MEN

-- Harold M. Voth, M.D.*

The disintegration of family life in the United States is a crisis of the greatest possible magnitude. This phenomenon with all of the consequences poses a greater threat to our society than any other. Our economic, energy and social problems are related to the family crisis, but these matters can be solved by strong, wise and intelligent leaders. If the disintegration of the family does not cease, the very quality of our people will change. These changed people and the values they will live by will alter our way of life beyond recognition. If present trends continue for another generation or two or three, the United States will fold in upon itself. All our external (and internal) adversaries need to do is wait patiently.

Divorce has profound effects on developing children and on the couple itself. These effects are both immediate and long term. The immediate effects are associated with the stress and consequences of attachment and loss. The long term effects have to do with developmental consequences and the longer term effects of stress due to loss. On the surface, there appear to be more serious consequences for children who are still developing rapidly, but there are developmental and maturational consequences for adults as well.

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RADM, MC, US Naval Reserve (Ret.)

The attachments within a family are generally quite strong, more so in some families than in others, of course. Not only is there a strong bonding among the family members but also to the larger whole, e.g., to the family unit itself and to the members of the extended family. These family bonds are probably the strongest known to man.

Of the many consequences of these attachments - the complex bondness within the family - none is more important than the psychological developmental effects each member has on the other. It has long been recognized that a good man brings out the best in a woman, that a good woman brings out the best in a man, that children bring out the best in both. No other class of stimuli is more important to the psychological development of children than two parents who love each other, are bonded to each other and who are committed to their children. The greater whole, the family itself, brings out the best in all of its members.

One of the great discoveries in medicine has been the unmistakable illness-producing effect of so-called object loss, that is a breaking of attachments and their subsequent loss. A wide range of physical and psychological illnesses, including cancer, have been observed to be the consequences of attachment and subsequent loss. Associated with such losses is a profound sense of defeat and a winding down of the individual's vitality. These observations have been made clinically for well over a hundred years and through more formal research during the past 35 or 40 years. Some physicians rank the stress of loss through divorce second only to loss through death of loved ones. Predictably, a wide spectrum of physical and psychological illnesses develop following such losses.

The loss in vitality to the society and the personal suffering of the men and women who undergo the awful wrench of divorce and its sequelae defies estimation. It would be impossible to quantify the consequences of the broken dreams, the happy family times that cease to be, the absence of that marvelous sense of warmth and security which an intact family provides, the loss in national productivity and the health care costs caused by the psychophysiological reaction to the stress of broken object attachments. Visitation rights are a far cry from the continuous relationships within the home.

To love and to be loved are powerful vitalizing forces, and to be once burned makes many people twice shy. Our society is comprised of millions of people who live emotionally impoverished lives because they do not again wish to experience the trauma of a major loss. Many who have divorced marry again and they form good marriages, but many marry in name only; they put a good outward face on their marriage but they never re-establish the intensity of what can be achieved and may once have been for them. It is alarming to speculate on how much more these millions of people could contribute to life if they began each day full of the zest which derives from happy family life.

A not so obvious consequence of divorce is the slowed or stalled psychological growth that results from the detachment among family members. Excluding those marriages which should never have occured in the first place, most of the strife between married couples and the discontent, anxiety or other symptoms which occur in the family are expressions of maturational struggles within the various family members, the parents in particular.

It is easier to run away from situations which create distress rather than endure, master those situations and mature in the process. Psychological growth tends to slow or even cease as couples disengage from each other. Maturation may continue some from biological imperatives from within and from environmental demands; but when the family breaks up, some of life's most powerful maturational stimuli are denied the former married couple and their children.

Even worse than slowed or stalled psychological growth are the various expressions of the psychological retrogressions which may result following divorce. Some of these conditions derive from bitterness, loneliness, idle time, but most result from the stress of loss referred to earlier. Individuals turn to drugs, alcohol, aberrant and self-destructive life styles, including a succession of transient, largely meaningless relationships. Overt psychiatric illnesses develop in some, people die sooner through "natural" causes and some by suicide.

One-half of the marriages in the United States end in divorce. Some of these are second and third, etc., marriages. The 50% divorce rate is a barometer of a profound disturbance in the human condition - it is not a passing phase. The biological imperative to mate is powerful, people will continue to marry, but the psychological health and maturity which is necessary to make the heterosexual bond durable is worsening. The perils to the individual and to our society are staggering.

Remedial steps to be taken are not easily implemented. I have a few observations and suggestions.

1. Many women would prefer to remain in the home were it not for economic pressures. An improving economy will make it possible for some women to return to the home.

2. All proposed legislation and existing laws and guidelines should be examined with regard to their impact on the family.

   a. Federal funds for subsidies for child care instead of funding Day Care Centers.

   b. Work quotas for women in heavy industry should be re-examined. Placing women among men for long periods of time in intimate situations inevitably leads to new heterosexual relationships and to divorce. Sailors' wives strenuously object to women going to sea with their men for this very obvious reason.

   c. It is my understanding that the Armed Forces are paying more attention to transfer policy of its members with regard to the impact on the family. Separation of man and wife for long periods is a good way to break up a marriage.

3. I believe the Federal Government should endorse the concept of preferential hiring of men with families and single individuals with children to support, all other considerations being equal. Men with families to support are losing jobs to unmarried men and women.

4. Retaining pregnant, unwed service women on active duty is unwise, in my opinion.

5. The entire nation must carefully examine the effects of the feminist movement on the family. I believe that movement has substantially harmed family life.

Colmery-O'Neil
Veterans Administration
Medical Center

2200 Gage Boulevard
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Veterans
Administration

May 4, 1983

In Reply Refer To: 677/11

Honorable Jeremiah Denton
United States Senate
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Denton:

Here are answers to the three questions you asked.

1. What advice do you give to patients who come to you considering a divorce?

My first advice is to suggest to the couple that psychological factors within themselves are in all probability preventing the marriage from being happy and that the provocative hurts, etc., are merely a means to an end. That end is emotional distance. Above all, I advise the couple to table their plans for divorce and try very hard to stop doing those things which provoke the other party. Then the couple must talk to each other and attempt to discover the true basis for their provocations. Inevitably, their searches will lead to the discovery that true closeness, cooperation and harmony are difficult to tolerate. This fact points to neurotic conflicts in both. Some may need professional help to resolve these conflicts.

2. Could you identify what you believe are the major stresses and influences driving marriages apart these days?

Factors driving marriages apart fall into two categories, (a) psychological forces and personality traits within the minds of the couples, and (b) environmental factors. These include: the changing sexual mores of the times, the ideology of the feminist movement, women working outside the home. Many women have gotten caught up by the "do your own thing" ethic of feminism and before long become lured away from their family commitments, by other men or the appeal of following a vocation or profession outside the home. These temptations overwhelm many women, especially when they listen to feminists who believe the homemaker is being exploited by men and society generally. When men cannot return to their families at the end of the day because of work assignments and on weekends, they too fall under sway of outside temptations.

There is a very glaring absence of effort by all aspects of society to remind everyone of how priceless the family is and what a great service men and women who make families are providing mankind. Some churches are paying attention to this issue.

Inflation is forcing many men to work at two jobs and is forcing many women into the work place who would remain at home if they could make ends meet.

Unemployment is devastating to the human spirit. When a man is denied the opportunity to provide for his family, he eventually becomes psychologically impaired and some are destroyed. Family life changes enormously under these conditions.

The Armed Services should strive to separate families as little as possible and transfer service men (and their families) from duty station to duty station as little as possible.

3. How does government policy fit into all this? What can Congress do to help?

When the federal government denies the effects of gender differences in all aspects of our way of life, it does great harm to society. To eliminate the reference to gender in government regulations, etc., is a mistake.

An alternate to day care centers should be found for the government to subsidize the care of children..

It is a mistake to keep an unmarried pregnant service woman on active duty.

I believe it should be policy to favor employment of men with families or single parents with children.

The government should take a harder stand against pornographic materials. Such material furthers the loosening of the necessary constraints against indiscriminate sexual behavior.

An all out effort should be made to stamp out the use of illegal drugs. Drugs damage and at times destroy family life.

All government policies, laws and regulations should be examined for their effects on the stability of family life. The principle to be followed is to maximize the possibilities for the father to provide for the family, for the mother to care for children up to the first year of school.

Bussing children away from their neighborhood schools is destructive. The child's sense of belonging and security is undermined. Parental participation in school events becomes nil. Placing poverty level children in affluent neighborhoods increases their sense of inferiority.

Transporting children many miles daily is a stress which drains them of energy and time which could be spent at home or with peers at play.

Sincerely yours,

Harold M. Voth

HAROLD M. VOTH, M.D.
Chief of Staff

Senator **Denton**. Thank you, Dr. Voth. I note that you have another page to your testimony on remedial steps. If I fail to ask you, I hope you will prompt me to ask you what remedial steps you see can be taken.

Dr. **Voth**. I did not know whether you wanted me to go into that or not.

Senator **Denton**. No, that is quite all right. I will ask you that question.

Dr. **Voth**. All right.

Senator **Denton**. I want to make clear to the panel of three here that I would like to have you define today that which all three of you may agree on in terms of remedial measures; if you will, of the type I mentioned in my opening statement. That is, would all three of you agree that it would be good for our society were we to have an increased propensity as a result of cultural and other influences toward a greater likelihood of forming good marriages and holding them together in love and cooperation? I believe a phrase that the military uses a lot would apply here: a "synergistic effect" on each of the individuals. It's not just an additive effect from the mother, the father, the brother, the sister, but something greater than the sum of those.

Would we agree with that?

Dr. **Voth**. Absolutely.

Senator **Denton**. OK. Do we believe that there are influences which are phenomenally new in American society, but which have cropped up in other civilizations in other ages that are tending today to make it more difficult than necessary to form those kinds of marriages, and if so, what are these influences and what could we do to lessen them or eliminate them?

Mr. **Hall**. Do you want me to lead off?

Senator **Denton**. One very strong point that Reverend Hall has already made addresses that. He believes in the power of mutuality of prayer. I must say that the only differential thing in the Senatorial body about my life has led me to acknowledge the power of prayer. There is a group of doctors now in the world or in the United States—I think it is international—many of whom were former atheists, who haved banded together to write books about how they became extreme believers in the power of prayer to produce miraculous recoveries in their patients. So I acknowledge that.

I already believe that. I think it is unfortunate that some of us have to learn that the hard way, and many of us never will. I also want Dr. McAdoo to know—or rather Ms. Mallett to know that my parents were divorced when I was in the seventh grade. I do not mean to use the term broken family in an insulting way. If you can think of another term—only you say single-parent family, but sometimes that does not characterize the situation. Neither parent takes care of the child sometimes, so it would not be all-inclusive to say single parent family because there are too many kids running around the streets in New York--witness Covenant House and what goes on up there—where these kids are so far gone, being used as sexual toys by the rich homosexuals who rent them for $40 to $90 an hour depending on what it is they have in mind. Those kids are near suicide.

While I agree with you, Ms. Mallett, that one should not tag an unfortunate single parent with any kind of denigration, I do believe that we can categorize divorce as an unfortunate incident for both the parties involved. Would you go so far as to agree with that, except in the cases where the marriage is better broken apart than not?

Nevertheless, I would say that in those cases, it would have been better that it not have been formed.

Would you agree with that?

Ms. MALLETT. To say the home is broken, no, I would not agree with you; to say that the marriage, marital relationship broke down, yes. To say that it is an unfortunate experience, yes. To say that it has to stay that way, no.

Senator DENTON. To stay that way, no, you mean—oh, you mean that the effects need not stay as constant. All the testimony has indicated the correctness of that.

Ms. MALLETT. Yes. I am a single parent. I was divorced, and I have raised five children.

Senator DENTON. Yes.

Ms. MALLETT. My children do not like the reflection of having come from a broken home because, sir, my home has never had that effect on my children.

Senator DENTON. And I am sure that Dr. Voth meant to establish tendencies rather than eternally accurate descriptions of what happens to a broken family.

Go ahead.

Dr. VOTH. Well, what happens, of course, depends on when the divorce occurs, what the ages are, what they do after the divorce, and so on. You asked whether there is anything in history that parallels what is happening today. Well, in ancient Greece, for instance, they did not let mothers take care of children. The role of the mother was downgraded, and this has been pointed to as one of the factors that led to the rise of homosexuality.

Children have to have mothers, and there is just no way around that. And of course materialism, the wars of Rome, eventually the families broke up because there was no one around to take care of the children.

I think the great need facing America is to upgrade our realization of how terribly important children are. They are going to replace us all. And what kind of adults they become and what kind of values they live by, will they be able to sustain what America has become and advance her to new heights. The future depends on what kind of men and women they become. That is a direct function of the kind of parenting they got as children.

Now, granted, after a family breaks up, parents create various kinds of substitute situations. There may be an extended family. We heard quite a bit about the black family. And I think that is marvelous, but still there is no equal substitute for a good mature man and woman who love each other who keep the family intact.

That is not to say that people of strength cannot emerge from broken homes. Indeed, they do. But overall you are ahead if your family has not collapsed.

Senator DENTON. And if your family has gone to the dogs, to a certain degree, which would be proportionately indefinable, but if the family does go to the dogs, to a certain degree, there are many examples in history to indicate that the nation loses its power, indeed its entity.

Dr. VOTH. That is right. In ancient Rome, for instance, a lot of what is happening today is a replay. Family life was terribly disintegrated. Incidentally, there was a very militant feminist movement back then. One of the unhappy aspects of the current feminist movement is that one rarely if ever hears the more militant feminists speak out in favor of taking care of children. They tend to put that function, that very vital function far down on their scale of values.

That is very unfortunate. You can point to some good that that movement has done, too. But on this issue I think they have done great harm.

Senator DENTON. One issue on which I would like to unite with the feminists is one that may be roughly defined as pornography. I could not define that term with precision, but I am talking about regarding woman or femaleness as nothing more than a sexual toy, a recreational device for a male, which seems to me to be very pervasive on television and in the so-called literature of the age. I just wonder if feminists and those who are so-called profamily could not get together on that one issue. There are laws on this subject which have been on our books since the Constitution was written, and the Supreme Court has ruled consistently and repeatedly that pornography and obscenity are not protected by the first amendment, particularly through the mails.

Yet those laws today are being totally winked at. I am no prude, but I wonder if we are not hurting our society a great deal and failing to promote the general welfare by not facing up to enforcement of the laws which has been traditionally essential to self-discipline in that feld.

If a woman is to be protected from the result of that mindset, I do not know why they are not unanimously opposed to that sort of thing.

Dr. VOTH. It is remarkable—first, let me say, I cannot think of any facet of society that debases, exploits women more than the whole pornography industry and allied activities. I find it as a curiosity that the feminist movement has not gotten up in arms over that.

But they do not seem to, and I think they should.

Senator DENTON. Well, they do. I have testified before some House committees in which leading feminists would indicate to me that they were entirely with me on that subject. They had no less an opponent the other day on television than the executive vice president for public affairs of Planned Parenthood, who remarked to me during a break in which we were debating the HHS regulation on parental notification for prescription contraceptives on how terrible the situation is becoming. She said she had her 14-year-old daughter watching the Wizard of Oz. And she thought that this was going to be relatively wholesome entertainment for her. And to show you the sign of our times which is so significant, she said right in the middle of the program on comes an ad about Atlantic City and this bargain rate to go down there, gamble, drink, and to live with a friend. And there was no question about who the friend was. It was either a homosexual or heterosexual partner, with the heterosexual one not one with whom you have enjoyed the state of establishing wedlock.

She said the daughter smiled at that. She had a little problem with that sort of thing going on. I know you cannot censor that sort of thing, at least not in this day and age and mindset.

But why are we showing up to 99 percent of the sex shown on television and in the movies as enjoyable only outside of marriage? I do not see that as promoting the general welfare. It's always that the grass is always greener. I recall Rain, the little short story in which the man of God commits suicide after having gone to the prostitute. I would not want to bless that kind of despair, nor the kind which caused the girl to commit suicide the other day down there in the train when she felt the guilt feelings about pregnancy.

But on the other hand, I cannot see the opposite extreme. What can we in government do or what should we do about that sort of thing?

Mr. HALL. Senator, I think we can begin to look back to the Preamble of the Declaration of Independence, which says that we need to provide for the common welfare.

Senator DENTON. Promote the general welfare.

Mr. HALL. Promote it.

Senator DENTON. And that is exactly what I said in my opening statement.

Mr. HALL. Yes.

Senator DENTON. Go ahead.

Mr. HALL. And I think within that, that that means that we come down hard with laws and statutes that will control this until such time as we can reestablish the integrity of the American family.

Senator DENTON. I could not get the attention of 14 Senators on the floor with that, I am sure. But I do not intend to stop trying; 14 can become 15, and more. I do believe it is vital.

Go ahead.

Mr. HALL. It is, sir, because it is the integrity of the family that is involved, and some of this is the pervasive influence by the commercial establishment into American livingrooms, which violates the control of the father in the family over what is being viewed by the children. And it may mean that there has to be some harsher, sterner, an ability of the parents to be able to accept the hatred of their children in curtaling some of their activities.

It also means that there can be a strength between a husband and wife, a father and a mother, which is not there in either one of them alone.

Senator DENTON. Well, a young man behind me, Karl Moor, and others, spent hundreds of hours trying to stop the liberalization of those laws in the new criminal code. We succeeded in scores of cases, but the progress was minimal and I am not sure that it was not a net loss in what we were able to do. So it is not an encouraging prospect, that struggle, and as you indicate, Ms. Mallett, one takes quite a bit of misinterpretation of what you are trying to do and where you are coming from.

But I would ask you to submit in writing to me, the three of you, upon further reflection, some suggestions on what we can do. Reverend Hall mentioned some strict laws. I do not believe you can legislate morality that is against the average morality of the citizenry and still have a republic or a democratically responsible system of government.

You can continue to legislate from morality. I do not know that anyone has repealed the 10 Commandments upon which in law school our law students are taught our laws are supposed to be based. But yet we are proceeding through the rulings of Federal judges and by the laws and the prosecution or lack of prosecution thereof as if they have been repealed as the basis of our law.

Yes?

Dr. VOTH. Well, there are values in society, obviously, that strengthen it and give it stability, and then there are human values that tear it down. A society is like any other organization. You have to take care of it or you are going to lose it. And while it may not seem to be possible to legislate morality, in fact, we do in a variety of ways. We set up laws that people cannot break.

It seems to me we have to get tougher about pornography. The courts now refer to the community standard.

Community standards are determined by the people. What I was saying earlier is that millions of the current generation did not get a good home life and as a result, they did not mature fully. They are going to change those community standards, and soon our whole legal system will reflect the effect of their personality and their values. We are then going to be in deep, deep trouble. In fact, I already think we are.

Senator DENTON. Let me ask you one last question which is not directly related to this, but it has come up in Dr. Voth's testimony and in Reverend Hall's, and came up in conversation between me and a number of journalists who are interested in this. I think in order to win this battle you have got to get the journalists interested and involved because that is where the public gets their information. I am including the television media.

Was there a healthy institution of the family in societies before the establishment of any kind of religion? For example, the Greeks had gods and goddesses. Socrates himself—and I have read his Republic many times—says things that were they said today would be taken as too prudish ~~re~~garding this very subject.

He was criticizing, for example, among the things they put him to death for, Greek drama as it had become depraved, and the effect that it had upon Greece. And he said we have to stop that. They did not like hearing that. The same thing could be said, perhaps, about some of our own cultural influences today. And I imagine the perpetrator of the comments would receive a similar fate.

But were there institutions of the family before Judea –Christianity and Mohammedanism, and if so, what was the driving force that caused the male who was stronger physically to constrain himself sexually within the couple?

Dr. VOTH. I am not really an expert in that, although I will say that from what I know families did exist. To what extent they remained intact, I do not know. However the bondedness between male and female is very strong, very powerful, and it is very possessive. I think from what little studying I have done about primitive man that they learned just from practicalities that you better leave somebody else's woman alone because to not do so broke up the cohesiveness of the tribe or the larger organization. That pattern of behavior was powerfully reinforced with the advent of religion. No question about that.

Senator DENTON. That is how I got labeled with being in favor of capital punishment for adultery before I came to Washington. I once mentioned in a speech that in primitive societies even today and historically in the primitive societies, adultery was the same as murder with respect to capital punishment because in that small community the disruption of adultery was at least as serious as that of murder.

It caused more murder, and so forth. But in this complex society I never suggested that we try that.

H. G. Wells in his "Outline of History" said—and I mentioned this in the last hearing—in tracing civilization and after emphasizing the point that he was an historian and not a believer and that he was not trying to draw lessons:

> We have tamed the beasts and schooled the lightening, but we have only begun to breed ourselves. Make men or women only sufficiently jealous or angry or fearful, and the hot red eyes of the caveman will glare out at us again today.

To me the striking thing about his comment is he used the word "jealous" before he used angry or fearful. And I do believe, personally, from my 34 years in the Navy and from my 58 years of life that there is no more reliable source of discontent, anger, and social discord than jealousy. I am talking especially about jealousy between men and women, especially in marriage.

Do any of the three of you disagree with that?

Mr. HALL. That is right.

Senator DENTON. Ms. Mallett?

Ms. MALLETT. I do not disagree with it, but if you are asking me as an expert on the subject, I went through that in the divorce situation. There seems to be a rather two sided opinion. In other words, it is a little bit more OK for the guy than it is for the gal.

Senator DENTON. A little bit more what?

Ms. MALLETT. A little bit more OK.

Senator DENTON. I definitely agree, if you want my personal stab at where we are going and why, that the double standard exists. I think there is some kind of physiological propensity for a male in terms of other species to have more of a tendency than the female toward multiple partnership.

But with respect to man, with us believing that we are created in the image and the likeness of God and different from animals, it seems that maybe we ought to try to act like that. Once indulging the double standard to the point of flaunting it, such as we did with the publication of such magazines as Playboy, I think it is a normal response after a period of time to produce Playgirl.

Ms. Mallett?

Ms. **Mallett**. If I may respond to that and share with you the fact that that is exactly what caused my divorce. In my testimony I said that many of us end up being single parents not by choice. Jealousy is a powerful motivator, yes. My husband was having an adulterous affair. As a family, a wife, and a mother, I did not care for it. But I am trying to share with you the fact that I have chosen not to remarry and I am doing very fine as a family.

Many good things were instilled in me by my parents who had 53 years of marriage. And I am passing this and my own strengths on to my children because I want them to be strong, powerful citizens, and have good families of their own, whether they be two or one, just good strong families.

Senator **Denton**. First, let me express my undaunted admiration for you and that attitude. To follow up on a question of yesterday, when I mentioned this subject in about this context, I was told by one of the experts in statistics that sexual jealousy was not that much a factor in marriage. I think it was a judge on the one hand and a sociologist on the other.

And I said yes, but from my own counseling of couples and from trying to keep them together—and again not being a prude or a perfect man by any means—but thinking that there is an infinite difference between trying and not trying to be good—I found that out of those marriages which I was not able to help keep together, although adultery was never mentioned in the divorce proceedings, it was almost always the first critically nonacceptable event that took place between the two spouses.

Ms. **Mallett**. I do not think that the average person who is going through it realizes that it is the straw that breaks the camel's back. In other words, it is the symptom, not the cause. Communication has broken down, and that leads you off on different paths, but that one incident——

Senator **Denton**. Well, I am glad to hear you. I am definitely going to have you all say something. Go ahead, Reverend Hall.

Mr. **Hall**. Yes. Senator, what I would say in regard to this and what I found out out of years of counseling and working with couples whose marriages are in difficulty and where there have been divorces and adultery is the stated legal cause for the divorce action before the State tribunal, usually this is not the cause of the divorce. It is simply a symptom of the failure of the bonding of the couple and lack of proper communication between them, because as we look at it—and what we discover is that in the adulterous act, it is an act of anger, an act of jealousy that takes place on the part of either spouses because they feel that they are not understood. They are not wanted. They are not needed.

And that has been a breakdown in the sexuality of the two people involved because they are not communicating.

Senator **Denton**. I do not think you mean that in every case the adulterous person has to be the one that has been hurt and is really the injured party and the innocent party.

Mr. **Hall**. No.

Senator **Denton**. What were you saying? It sounded as if that is what you were saying.

Mr. **Hall**. What I am saying is that in that we cannot look at adultery as the cause of the failure of the marriage. It is a symptom.

Senator **Denton**. I did not say that it was. I said it was sort of the first unacceptable landmark, as Ms. Mallett characterized it.

Mr. **Hall**. That is right.

Senator **Denton**. Yes, Dr. Voth?

Dr. **Voth**. Well, the act of infidelity can be caused by many things. It can be an act of anger and revenge, but usually it reflects the inability of the couple to have really completely bonded together. And usually some immaturities creep up, and the grass looks greener, but then the feedback, harmful impact is quite substantial. There was a book out some years ago called "The Open Marriage" in which the guiding concept was, well, you have your marriage, but you can do anything else you want.

That is just foolish.

Senator **Denton**. There is more than one book, Dr. Voth; there is a whole philosophy that we have come to an enlightened new age and we are dealing with a sexual revolution in which marital contracts need not involve fidelity. That is why I am asking these questions.

Dr. **Voth**. May I be very crude? That is just hogwash in my opinion. I mean, that is nonsense. You cannot do that to your spouse and expect your marriage to endure. It is just going to fail; that is all there is to it.

Senator **Denton**. How do you feel about that, Ms. Mallett?

Ms. **Mallett**. About marital fidelity?

Senator **Denton**. Yes.

Ms. **Mallett**. I believe very strongly in it.

Mr. **Hall**. So do I. We agree.

Senator **Denton**. All three of you. OK. Well, on that note, thank you very much.

For our last panel we will have two witnesses: Dr. Richard Wilmarth, who is the president-elect of the American Mental Health Counselors Association and the director of Counseling and Human Services Consultants from Opelika, Ala.; and Dr. Arthur Kornhaber from the Foundation for Grandparenting.

Dr. Kornhaber's Foundation for Grandparenting is in Mount. Kisko, N.Y. Welcome, gentlemen. And I will ask Dr. Wilmarth to proceed first.

STATEMENTS OF RICHARD R. WILMARTH, PRESIDENT-ELECT, AMERICAN MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION AND DIRECTOR, COUNSELING AND HUMAN SERVICES CONSULTANTS, OPELIKA, ALA.; AND ARTHUR KORNHABER, FOUNDATION FOR GRANDPARENTING, MOUNT KISKO, N.Y.

Dr. **Wilmarth**. Thank you, Senator Denton. Thank you for inviting me to testify at this hearing, and I would like to bring you greetings from your friends and constituents in Alabama.

Senator **Denton**. Well, to say the least, although you are a very fine mental health counselor and director in your own right, it is not entirely coincidental that we had an Alabama man here. And welcome to you, sir.

Dr. WILMARTH. Thank you, Senator. I too wish to commend you for your personal interest and commitment to resolving the problems that are currently plaguing our American families.

By way of introduction, I would like to share with you that I am a licensed professional counselor and director of a counseling center in Opelika, Ala. I have been providing mental health counseling services for over 10 years. I have worked with couples, individuals, men, and women, as well as children of divorced families, both in a pre- and post-divorce situation.

I received my doctorate degree from Auburn University in counseling, and I have been certified by the National Academy of Certified Clinically Mental Health Counselors. I, as you have mentioned, am president-elect of the American Mental Health Counselors Association, which is the third largest division of the American Personnel and Guidance Association, a 41,000-member consortium of professional counselors.

My comments today will address three separate areas related to the problems of broken families in America: first, the psychological and emotional effects of divorce on men; second, a brief overview of current intervention strategies and assistance that is available to divorcees; and third, a brief discussion of possible prevention strategies.

While my comments may be generalized to both men and women, for the most part I will concentrate on the male divorcee, since I have had many years of experience working with this population.

Senator DENTON. That will be especially helpful because we have had a preponderance of testimony on the effects on women.

Dr. WILMARTH. The information I will share with you today comes not from volumes and volumes of research, although that is very important information; it comes from my personal experience with couples, families, and divorcees who have come to my practice for counseling services.

With the rising divorce rate, one might conclude that the effects of a divorce are less traumatic and less disturbing than in the past. This, I have found, is not true. Divorce is far from painless. Divorce is stressful. Many factors must be considered when exploring sources and causes of the high stress levels that are found in divorced males.

Again, no divorce is painless. The major effect of divorce is stress. This has been alluded to today in the testimony that has preceded me. I would first like to dispell a myth. Over the years of working with divorced males, we as a society have a tendency to deal with what I call—or I have labeled it, anyway—the "happy go lucky bachelor syndrome."

This is a myth, Senator. The men I work with are neither happy or carefree. They are full of frustration, anxiety, and I would like, hopefully, today in my testimony to express some of the causes of this frustration and anxiety and stress.

In the males that I deal with, I have observed what we would consider a natural grief process that is associated with the personal loss experienced due to their divorce.

Elizabeth Kubler Ross has been nationally acclaimed for her studies on grief, and the phases that she delineated in this research are very evident in dealing with males in a divorce situation.

There is first the phase of shock or denial or disorganization. And from that they proceed through a rather severe period of depression in which case there is often suicide attempts and certainly suicidal ideation. Once they have proceeded through that phase, they then may go through a period of anger and resentment. It is only after a long period of time, in some cases, especially when there has been no intervention by way of counseling, that they begin to accept their new role and lifestyle.

It is at this time that they attempt to reintegrate and develop a more positive self-concept. And only if they are successful at reintegration do they start attempting to reestablish intimate relationships.

A third area of stress is the alienation from children that males experience. We do live with a double standard, Senator, and unfortunately, it causes the male to end up suffering by being alienated from his children, the extended family, and a general loss of support from his friends, the church, family, and the community.

There are no more family functions going on for the divorced male, no more church and family picnics. There is a general void of social interaction which leads to a real sense of inadequacy and frustration as divorced men attempt to interact with their children and other members of the family.

This problem is complicated by the fact that most men have had little experience in coping with the day-to-day demands and responsibilities of parenting.

Another stress area that is oftentimes not mentioned, and especially in our economic times where we do find more women moving into the work force, is that, for a male who gets a divorce, there is a reduction in lifestyle. In essence, many divorces cause a male to live on half the income that he was used to living on.

In a lot of cases the child support and alimony is an additional burden. And in a number of cases that I have dealt with personally, there is a rather large relocation expense because most males are forced to seek other habitat other than the one they had while they were married.

These stressors lead to many dysfunctional coping behaviors on the part of the male divorcee. I mention these as dysfunctional coping behaviors because these are what people do to try to cope, and they have negative consequences.

One is depression, and depression is very, very frequently severe among male divorcees. Another is alcohol and drug abuse. The third I have alluded to already, the social isolation. A fourth one which has not been discussed but deals with my "happy go lucky bachelor syndrome" is sexual permissiveness. Divorced males, often because of the perceived freedom that they have, tend to try to live up to an image of sexual permissiveness. I have found with many of the males I deal with, their first experience with sexual impotency occurs right after the divorce. These conditions exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and deepen the depression and lay a rather severe foundation for inadequate personal adjustment, which can possibly lead to a fear or avoidance of future intimate relationships, again causing increased withdrawal from productive social interaction.

Many males also experience a decrease in work productivity as a result of this stress, again leading to more stress because of intense feelings of frustration and a deeper sense of inadequacy.

Senator Denton, divorce is not painless for males. Now to my second area: Briefly, I would like to share some thoughts I have in regards to the current assistance that is available, and certainly this assistance is available to both males and females.

We have had mentioned today the notion of support groups, churches providing self-help groups, singles, Sunday school classes, and the like. In the church I attend in Opelika, Ala., one of our largest classes is a singles class. And that is very supporting. And there are a number of mental health agencies and individuals in private practice that also attempt to provide intervention and support to divorced males and females.

There are organized workshops that occur in the community that deal with communications skills training, assertiveness training, parental training, new lifestyle management training, and personal growth workshops. And of course the most important, I think, is the availability of individual and group counseling services for the divorced male.

Prevention strategies is my third area I wish to comment on today.

Senator DENTON. Would you summarize these, please, because we are overtime, and we want to be fair to the others.

Dr. WILMARTH. OK. Basically they are in the area of—why do we not just save those, and they will be in the written testimony.

Senator DENTON. All right, Dr. Wilmarth.

Dr. WILMARTH. I would like to make one comment about parental education, though, as being one of the strategies. I feel like we need to spend a little more time in fostering parental education in all segments of our society. And one thing in particular is——

Senator DENTON. Excuse me. What do you mean by parental education? Do you mean education of parents that are already parents or education of people who are about to become parents or education of the young by their parents on how to become parents?

Dr. WILMARTH. I think the latter is what I am really speaking about. We need to include it in our socialization process. Role models are needed. Children need to see effective interpersonal relationships between their parents. Many divorcees today come from divorced families.

They may never have observed a productive and satisfying marital relationship. As you can see, there are many services implied by my testimony. Many of these services are being provided by qualified mental health counselors in a variety of clinical settings.

And with your permission, Senator Denton, as president-elect of the American Mental Health Counselors Association, I would be remiss if I did not express our concern regarding the affordability and availability of counseling services to the general public. Currently neither Federal nor State agencies recognize the professional counselor as an independent practitioner in the health care delivery system. This condition continues to exist even in light of recent NIMH data that shows mental health counselors and related master's level practitioners providing one-third of direct client services in federally funded community mental health centers.

Other sources indicate that up to 50 percent of all direct services in both private and public settings are being provided by master's and doctoral level counselors. Even though these facts have been available for some time, professional counselors have yet to be recognized as one of the core providers of the mental health team.

The American Mental Health Counselors Association stands ready to assist the Congress by providing any information that you may need to develop legislation addressing the concerns presented at this hearing.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Wilmarth and questions with responses follow:]

ATTACHMENT "B"

PRESIDENT-ELECT AND TREASURER-EDWARD S. BECK, CCMHC
PAST PRESIDENT-GARY SEILER, Ed.D., CCMHC
MIDWEST REGION REPRESENTATIVE-THOMAS E. MURRAY, Ed.D.
NORTH ATLANTIC REGION REPRESENTATIVE-ILSE NATHAN, M.A., CCMHC
SOUTHERN REGION REPRESENTATIVE AND SECRETARY-DAVID K. BROOKS, JR., MA. Ed.
WESTERN REGION REPRESENTATIVE-JONAH STEINHAUS, M.F.C., CCMHC

**AMERICAN
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TESTIMONY OF

Dr. Richard R. Wilmarth, CCMHC, LPC

Chairman
AMERICAN MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION
LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES
of the
UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

THE HONORABLE JEREMIAH DENTON
Chairman

"THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON MEN"

DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN PERSONNEL AND GUIDANCE ASSOCIATION, TWO SKYLINE PLACE, 5203 LEESBURG PIKE, FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA 22041

AMERICAN
MENTAL HEALTH
COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION
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PRESIDENT-ELECT AND TREASURER-EDWARD S. BECK, CCMHC
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SOUTHERN REGION REPRESENTATIVE AND SECRETARY-DAVID K. BROOKS, JR., MA. Ed.
WESTERN REGION REPRESENTATIVE-JONAH STEINHAUS, M.F.C., CCMHC

UPO 1321, MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY, MOREHEAD, KY 40351, 1-800-354-2008, 606-784-8142

Thank you for inviting me to testify at this hearing and I bring you greetings from your friends and constituents in Alabama. I too wish to commend you for your personal interest in and commitment to resolving the problems that are currently plaguing our American families. By way of introduction, I am Doctor Richard R. Wilmarth, a licensed professional counselor and Director of a Counseling Center in Opelika, Alabama. I have been providing mental health counseling services for over ten years and have worked with both couples and individual men and women. I have also worked directly with a number of children from divorced families both in a pre-divorce and post-divorce situation. I received my doctorate in counseling from Auburn University and have been certified by the National Academy of Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselors. I am currently the president-elect of the American Mental Health Counselors Association, which is the third largest division of the American Personnel and Guidance Association, a 41,000 membership organization of professional counselors.

My comments today will address three separate areas related to the problems of broken and dysfunctional families in America. Specifically I will address: 1) The Psychological and Emotional effects of divorce on men. 2) Current intervention assistance available to men. And 3) A brief discussion of possible prevention

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strategies.

The information I will share with you today comes from my personal experience with couples, families and divorcees who have come to my center for counseling services.

With the rising divorce rate such that almost one out of every two marriages ends in divorce, one might conclude that the effects of divorce are less traumatic and less disturbing than they have been in the past. Senator Denton, this, I have found, is not true. Divorce is far from being painless! Divorce is a stressful event for both men, women, children and others of the extended family. Many factors must be considered when exploring the sources and causes of the high stress levels that I have found existing with the divorced males. First, let me express again, that there is no such thing as a painless divorce. There are major consequences that each person must experience when they go through a divorce. One of the most obvious consequences of a divorce is that of stress. There are several factors that account for this stress in men. One of the areas that I have found in my work with divorced men that appears to present a great deal of stress is what I have called the happy-go-lucky bachelor image. As you are aware, many people believe that men experience a great deal of freedom and a great sense of excitement upon receiving a divorce, and our society has promoted the idea that a divorced man is foot-loose and fancy free. I present to you today that this is a myth. However, it does project an image that many divorced men attempt to live up to. As a result many of the men I have worked with experience what I have labeled the happy-go-lucky bachelor syndrome. The root of this syndrome is found in the inability of the divorced male to live up to the perceived expectations and image of the happy-go-lucky bachelor. This produces a great deal of frustration and anxiety as the divorced male attempts to live up to this myth. A second source of stress that I have observed in the divorced male consists of the natural grief process that is associated with a personal loss. As Elizabeth Kubler-Ross has adequately demonstrated, there appear to be stages that one goes through in the grieving process. My experience with divorced males confirms that many men go through these predictable stages of the process. The first stage is that of shock, denial and disorientation, which is often followed by the second stage of depression and resentment, leading to the third stage of anger, followed by the fourth stage of acceptance and then the fifth stage which is a re-establishment of the divorced male's self-concept leading to a re-establishment of intimate relationships.

The third major source of stress that I have found with divorced males deals with the stress that is associated with the alienation men experience from children and extended family. The divorced male loses a great majority of his support system upon being granted a divorce. This support system may include friends, members of the church, members of the extended family and members of the community. The divorced male no longer participates in family functions. As a result of this, a void of social interaction, a loss of social support occurs leading to a sense of inadequacy and frustration as divorced men attempt to interact with their children and other members of their family. This situation is complicated by the fact that most men have had little experience in coping with the day to day demands and responsibilities of parenting.

The fourth stressful condition that I have observed in divorced males is that of reduction in lifestyle. It is a well known fact that more women are in the work force than have ever been there before. Such that both men and women have income. So when the divorced male begins to realign himself in his new situation, in many cases, his income has been cut in half. In addition to the loss of his wife's portion of the income, the divorced male oftentimes will have to pay additional funds in child support. A third little known expense is that of relocation. The divorced male oftentimes will have to relocate, and in doing so, incurs additional financial burdens.

These stresses lead to many dysfunctional coping behaviors on the part of the male divorcee. Although, I am sure there are other dysfunctional coping behaviors, I present to you a partial list, including the following: depression, alcohol and drug abuse, social isolation and sexual permissiveness. I might note that this last area is one in which many men experience additional stress due to the fact that for many divorcees, they experience their first episode of sexual impotency following a divorce. All these conditions exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and may deepen the depression laying a foundation for inadequate personal adjustment. This foundation can possibly lead to a fear of, or avoidance of future intimate relationships. The natural consequences, again, resulting in an increased need for withdrawal from productive social interaction.

Many males also experience a decrease in work productivity resulting from a divorce. Again, this condition may lead to more stress, increased feelings of frustration and a deepening sense of inadequacy. For the divorced male, divorce is not painless.

Currently, assistance to the divorced male is limited. Intervention for the divorced male, or assistance for the divorced male falls in three categories. The first category being that of self-help support groups, provided by churches, etc. The second category consists of organized workshops that focus on communication skills training, assertiveness training, parental training, new lifestyles management and personal growth workshops. The third category involves Individual group counseling.

Now, let us turn to possible prevention strategies. I believe that if we place more emphasis on premarital education and counseling, that focuses on the real demands of interpersonal relationships, rather than the fairy tale world of Prince Charming, we will see more satisfying relationships resulting in a reduction of the divorce rate. Next, we need to increase the availability and utilization of professional counseling services, focusing on the improvement of communication between adults. Finally, we must increase the availability of parental education. It is clear that an appropriate role model is needed for interpersonal relationships. Children need to see effective, interpersonal interaction between their parents. Many divorcees today come from divorced families. They may never have observed a productive and satisfying marital relationship.

As you can see, there are many services implied in my testimony. Many of these services are being provided by qualified mental health counselors in a variety of clinical settings. As president-elect of the American Mental Health Counselors Association, I will be remiss if I did not express our concern regarding the affordability and availability of counseling services to the general public.

Currently, neither federal or state agencies recognize the professional counselor as an independent practitioner in the mental health delivery system. This condition continues to exist even in light of recent NIMH data that shows that mental health counselors and related master's level mental health practitioners provide one-third of the direct client services in federally funded community mental health centers. Other sources indicate that up to fifty percent of all direct services in both private and public settings are being provided by master's and doctoral level counselors. Even though these facts have been available for some time, professional counselors have yet to be recognized as one of the core providers on the mental health team.

The American Mental Health Counselors Association stands ready to assist the Congress by providing any information that you may need to develop legislation addressing the concern presented at this hearing. Thank you Senator Denton for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony at these hearings.

ATTACHMENT "A"

TO: Senator Jeremiah Denton
Subcommittee on Family and Human Services
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
United States Senate

Do you see any widespread willingness among the men you counsel to seek counseling about how to become better husbands and fathers?

There has been an increase in the number of males who have come in for counseling. It is difficult to separate if they are there to be better husbands and fathers or just better persons. It might be helpful to separate the different counseling modalities and look at the mens' participation.

The first modality is individual counseling. An increase in men coming to individual counseling to help themselves gain a better sense of personal identity has occurred. They are also coming in to get more in touch with the affective sides of themselves and to learn to be better communicators. There also seems to be an increase in the number of men coming in for counseling whose wives are in counseling concurrently. Each of these reasons for entering counseling can have a very positive effect on men developing more effective relationship and parenting skills.

There has also been a substantial increase in the number of couples and families coming in for counseling to work on a variety of issues. Men in these situations seem much less reluctant to participate than seven to nine years ago. The issues that they are typically working on in these situations include: decision around divorce; developing better communication between the spouses and children; sex and sexuality; marital contracting; parenting skills; alcoholism; and past traumatic stress syndrome (especially with Vietnam Veterans).

There is also a growing number of men who are joining men's groups. These groups come in the form of support groups--much like the early women's groups--and more speciality groups. These specialty groups would include: single parent groups (with only male participants); groups for Vietnam War Veterans; gay support groups; and divorced men's groups.

There has also been a substantial increase in the number of men involved in couples group counseling. The groups can be therapeutically oriented or more psycho-educational in nature. This second type of group includes: couple communications groups; premarital exploration groups; marital and/or sexual enrichment groups; Lamaze or child birth classes; parenting skill training; and specialist groups (i.e., dual career couples, Vietnam Veterans).

A large part of this increase in men participating in counseling has been men who are less than 40 years of age. Counseling seems to be a more acceptable way to address problems and concerns for this population of men than the older group. Although this older group is starting to be seen at an increasing rate.

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TO: Senator Jeremiah Denton
Subcommittee on Family and Human Services
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
United States Senate

What would you identify as the primary causes of the extraordinary divorce rate that our society is experiencing today? What has happened in our society in the past decades to make this problem so serious?

There are a number of causes that contribute to the doubling of the divorce rate in this country in the past twenty years. If these causes are not addressed it has been estimated that 40% of all the marriages of persons born in the 1970's will end in divorce. Several factors have led to this increase, including (1) increased education and employment of women, (2) smaller families, (3) the Vietnam War, (4) greater social and religious acceptance of divorce, (5) reform in divorce laws, (6) the lack of premarital programs, and (7) access to cheaper legal assistance.

Increased education and employment of women. As more and more women and men combine a relationship and two careers, the stresses on these couples increase tremendously. These stresses come from a lack of time to focus on all the aspects of child care, housekeeping, careers, and the marital relationship needed to make the dual worker-dual career lifestyle work. Typically, the marital relationship suffers as the couple is forced to choose between where their time and energies are spent.

On a more positive side, with the increase in education and employment of women they are having more of a choice about staying in or getting out of a marriage. This feeling of not being "trapped" in a marriage has been shown to be positively related to higher marital satisfaction and adjustment.

Smaller families. With the size of the family shrinking, fewer couples are having to stay together for the "children's sake" because many couples do not have children at the time they are considering divorce.

The Vietnam War. The plight of the Vietnam War veteran has been well documented in the last few years. The post-traumatic stress syndrome associated with Vietnam Veterans have had a tremendous impact on their marital relationships. The stress of adapting back into society and the loss of friends has caused a major problem in their ability to establish and maintain intimate relationships.

Greater social and religious acceptance of divorce. Because of the large numbers of divorced persons in our society the stigma that traditionally was associated with divorce has decreased. Churches are also developing support programs for members of their congregations as more and more of them have been divorced and/or separated.

Reform in divorce laws. With the advent of "No Fault Divorce" laws in many states the need to "prove" one of the partners in the marriage was a "bad" spouse before a divorce was granted was eliminated. This has led to an increase in the divorce rate because in the past, many partners were unwilling to find fault in a spouse because there was a level of caring for that partner and they did not want to involve their children in the dispute.

Lack of premarital programs. Mnay couples enter their marriages with little idea of what marriage is about and how to be good spouses and parents. They have not addressed such critical issues as money, sex, families, expectations, wants and needs which can easily be explored prior to marriage. All one has to do is look at the tremendous number of divorces initiated during the first year of marriage to realize that a little exploration prior to the marriage could spare a lot of hurt, guilt, and expenses on the part of these newly-wed but unprepared couples.

Access to cheaper legal assistance. The costs for initiating and following through on divorce proceedings has decreased dramatically over the past ten years. This is allowing members of lower socio-economic groups better access to the courts and increasing the divorce rate. In the past members of these groups would just leave their spouses and thus not be counted as a divorced member of our society.

I think that the above factors have caused an increase in the divorce rate in this country. It is now becoming critical to develop preventive programs to address these concerns. I think that programs to release some of the streses or dual worker-dual career couples are essential considering over one-half of the couples in this country now fall into that lifestyle. I think that programs aimed at helping Vietnam Veterans and their families adapt and adjust to their war-time and post-war experience would be beneficial. It would also be beneficial to focus on programs for premarital couples, to help them explore their own relationship as well as the institution of marriage.

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Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Dr. Wilmarth. Dr. Kornhaber?

Dr. KORNHABER. I thank you, sir, for inviting me to the hearing. I read your opening statement, and I listened to one this morning and found it very sensitive and compassionate and certainly tuned in to what is happening. And I am very happy to speak before a fellow agnonizer over the state of the American family.

I am wearing two hats today. I am a pediatric psychiatrist and medical director of a pediatric neuropsychiatric group that treats between 300 and 400 families a week, and I have been doing this for 20 years. So I can speak from the point of view of a person who is indeed, like so many of my colleagues, in the trenches and is trying to fight the emotional plague in our country.

Second, I am also the founder and president of the Foundation for Grandparenting, which I started after I did 8 years of research into the grandparent-grandchild relationship.

This is the book "Grandparents/Grandchildren—The Vital Connection" that we published 2 years ago with Ken Woodward of Newsweek concerning the grandparent-grandchild relationship. What I am going to say is very, very important because after 8 years of ongoing research, I believe that present and future grandparents and elders are the people who can remedy the familial and social devastation that has been discussed here. I want to talk from a point of view of emotional incentives, not economic incentives, although economic incentives are very important. I am going to talk about attitudes and caring and altruism and love.

Because our society ages and does not honor old age—indeed, old age people do not honor themselves—and we do not honor childhood, it is very difficult for people to hear this message, just as you say. I have been on many shows. I was on a Donahue show with the grandparent issue, and I called him and I said, look, I want to come back on the show. I said I have some great stuff to teach people. I have a grandpa who is angry that his daughter got an abortion because she aborted his grandchild.

I have a mother who wants to legally adopt grandparents for her children because her parents are sitting on their duffs in Florida and abandoned the grandchildren. And, no, it is not really very sexy to the media.

So it is really an uphill fight and very frustrating. I know just what you are talking about.

Senator DENTON. I share your frustations. I did two back-to-back Phil Donahue shows yesterday morning, and I did it against the advice of one of my best friends. And I think he was right. I managed to lose my cool, and I think I was less effective than if I had had a less hostile audience.

Dr. KORNHABER. I am going to talk about the three generational family, which I feel holds the answers to the problems at hand and is a natural and biological welfare system that our society no longer honors or supports.

The little picture I supplied the committee depicts a three-generation family, and if we look at it in the context of divorce, when we remove the parents from the middle slot, the child will naturally fall into the lap of the grandparents.

I would like to talk to you about some of the results of the grandparent research because I think it is important. We found that the grandparent-grandchild bond is second only in emotional power to the importance to the bond between parents and children. The problems passed on from grandparent to parent are not directly passed on from grandparent to grandchild, although kids are profoundly affected by their parents' attitudes toward the grandparents.

And grandparents and grandchildren affect one another simply because they exist. The study showed that kids with close relationships to at least one grandparent were different from other kids with infrequent grandparent contact. Not only did these youngsters have a deep sense of belonging to a family and community, they cared for the people who cared for them.

They were not agists because of the older people who love them. One of the great dangers we have now is that 80 percent of the kids in our country do not have an intimate relationship with older people. Thus, when it comes time for those children to support the older people, they are not going to value those who they have to support, and they are going to be very angry about it.

Kids with close grandparents do not fear old age because their grandparents are a positive role model. Grandparents offer their children an emotional sanctuary from the everyday world and an emotional atmosphere of acceptance for just being alive. John Paul Sartre said his grandmother used to go into raptures of joy when he was hungry.

Thus, these youngsters felt deeply connected to their families and were highly socialized. They knew that their behavior reflected upon their families. They were very social. And they lived in a loving and emotionally secure world.

We also found out that grandparenting is a natural instinct. It is biological and manifested by certain thoughts, feelings and action, and it is certainly affected by the culture.

The roles of the grandparent grow and change with their deepening emotional attachment to the grandchild, the beneficiary of the grandparents roles.

At first the grandparents role is titular, a title conferred by the birth of a grandchild. Immediately, the grandparent becomes a living ancestor and a role model for this child no matter what the grandparent does. When an intimate relationship is established, the grandparent becomes a living historian and family archivist. As a teacher, a mentor, they teach children things they learn nowhere else in an atmosphere of acceptance. Taste, touch, smell, craft, perfection, integrity, all these things are taught by grandparents—who do not give out report cards.

As nurturers—this is where their role in divorce comes in. In my clinic, we have a grandparent clinical project. We call grandparents back from retirement when there is death or divorce. We try to get grandpa and grandma involved in single-parent families.

The nurturing role of grandparents is twofold: Indirect by supporting the child's parents, and direct by caring for the child. When grandparents and grandchildren spend a great deal of time together, grandparents become wizards in the eyes of the young child. Taking out teeth, false is a wizardry thing to a young child. And they are cronies to the older child.

These roles give meaning to the elders' lives and is generativity in its most powerful form—the application of a lifetime of wisdom and experience to a relationship with their progeny. For grandfathers it is the only time that men again have the time to nurture young people.

I think unwilling grandparent-grandchild divorce could be easily summed up in this picture that this youngster drew for me. I asked her to draw a picture of a grandma, and she drew a picture of a lady with her back turned to her. And I said, what is this? And she said, well, my parents got divorced. I live with my mom, and my father's grandmother, who I love very dearly, never talked to me for 2 years.

And I said, what happened? And she said, "she hates my mom's guts." And she threw me out with my mother. So I called her and they got together and there was a happy ending, but the point of the thing was that grandparents do not realize how important they are.

When divorce occurs in our society, where generations are isolated from one other and the three generational family is weak, divorce is often not limited to the willing divorce of partners. It is too often extended into the unwilling divorce of the couple's children from their grandparents. The sad part of this is that both grandparents and grandchildren are only silent witnesses to their own divorce. No one speaks for them.

This tragic state of affairs is a biological, social, and psychological aberration, all the more disturbing because it is becoming more and more frequent. The true frequency is unknown. I have 3,000 letters at home—3,000 letters of grandparents who are in this kind of situation.

Only recently has the issue emerged because more and more grandparents deprived of their grandchildren are resorting to litigation. A have cooperated with Congressman Biaggi in doing this. Single-parent families and blended families are a breeding ground for these situations.

Child abuse is a frequent occurrence. And a great deal of American children live in this type of family setting. I feel that the three generation—I am not taking away from single-parent families—but the three generational family is the natural support system for children, parents, and grandparents. As a child psychiatrist I feel that the three generational family is the way to go. We talk too much about two generational families. In these times it is often impossible for a single parent to raise kids by themselves.

I do not think nature made us to do that. Elders have compliantly allowed themselves to be edged out of the social mainstream and devalued. Most grandparents view their roles as frivolous. Our society has laid the burden of rearing children onto the rapidly dissolving nuclear family, mom, dad, and the kids, living in splendid isolation. More and more mothers are leaving the nuclear family to join the work force out of need or desire, leaving their children to be raised by paid strangers.

Many grandparents have willingly, even eagerly left their families singing the oft heard refrain: I raised my kids; now it is my turn to enjoy myself. We are raising a nation of grandorphans.

Thus, the three generational divorce easily occurs in families that are not close because when the grandparent-grandchild bond is not celebrated nor acted upon, parental divorce becomes the death knell for whatever vestige of the relationship that exists.

In close families, divorce puts a great strain upon the grandparent-grandchild bond. These important factors strain the relationship. The first is there is a longstanding interpersonal problem between grandparent and parent. A stormy parent-child relationship has been extended into a difficult grandparent-parent relationship. The grandchildren have been unhappily included.

The second is that there is a longstanding interpersonal problem between the grandparents and the spouse of their child. The spouse then becomes the sole custodian of the child through death or divorce, then they can easily remove the child from the distressed and despised grandparent.

The third is when a stressful event occurs. When parents divorce, grandparents suffer deeply, not only because they suffer for their own child's but they know that their access to the grandchild will be diminished. Especially if their child is not the custodial parent. At the extreme, many grandparents have actually been legislated out of existence because the custodial parent has denied them access to their grandchild.

Even in the best of families, the bond between the alternate generation is stressed in divorce. Remarriage may even add new grandparents or decrease contact with the old grandparents. Some fathers and mothers who have custody say that well, my child has too many grandparents. "I do not want to be bothered with the original biological ones."

Grandparents and grandchildren are not included in divorce settlements, nor even considered in the heat of the settlement process. Thus, their alienation from one another is a slow and subtle process. To minimize the effects of divorce on this relationship we suggest that grandparents and grandchildren visitation should be included in the settlement process to protect their relationship, and that——

Senator DENTON. Now, wait a minute. Visitation rights, but what about participating in the settlement? How is that?

Dr. KORNHABER. Well, that the grandparent-grandchild relationship should be considered in the parental divorce settlement so that that the integrity of that relationship be kept intact by frequent visitation and close contact.

During the divorce settlement, grandparents can cement the bonds with their grandchildren. We tell the grandparents to have a direct relationship with grandchildren—by supporting the parents during this time and spending a great deal of time with the children, rescuing them from the divorce process, without pressuring the kids to take sides or stressing their loyalties and not replacing the parents, but being true grandparents.

Grandparents should set a positive and supportive tone for their children's marriage. They should till an emotional soil in which a direct relationship to the grandchild will endure no matter what happens to the parents.

In many ways, we are a nation of irresponsible parents and grandparents, not only individually, but collectively. We are raising kids in familial anarchy and giving them a minimally protected childhood. I have only to cite the hordes of lonely, abused, television watching, latchkey kids in our land and retirement villages full of healthy elders who do nothing but relax—and I do not know what historians are going to say about this state of affairs in a hundred years.

Senator DENTON. Could you summarize the remainder, Dr. Kornhaber, because we are well over time at this point. I appreciate the testimony.

Dr. KORNHABER. Yes, sir.

We need a department of intergenerational projects and studies at the governmental level to teach and do research to use the wisdom and emotional power of our aged, in the future there will be more and more aged with less and less to do.

Contrary to popular opinion, emotional bonds need not be emotional bondage. Many of the personal and social problems that plague us will end when we become a nation of families, three generational and four generational families, including people who are not biologically related, in an intergenerational society.

I feel very strongly that we need an umbrella concept in a department of intergenerational studies—foster grandparents would be part of it—and a philosophy to use the emotional expertise and give—emotional work to our elders. These are the people when attached to the young in the schools and the daycare centers, who can really buffer the problems of the parents that affect the young.

We need older people to be heard, and to design a society where kids are not exploited, where there is not pornography, where there is some kind of stability in parenting and some reward. We need a right of passage for people into grandparenthood and a celebration of that state because indeed it is a stage of life. In our country we do not have that.

Thank you.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Dr. Kornhaber. Since you testified last, I will ask you a question while it is still fresh in my mind. To be a master of the obvious, we have high mobility among young couples, whether it is just one of them employed or both. They generally have to move around a good deal. And of course, this separates them from the grandparents, and the relationship is not as well established then during the early childhood as it would have been in the past. Is that not true?

Dr. KORNHABER. Yes. It is more than that, sir.

Senator DENTON. Yes.

Dr. KORNHABER. It is an attitude. You see, there is an attitude on the part of elders: "I have raised my children and that is it." And I think grandparents do not know how important they are.

Senator DENTON. Well, speaking as one and having—and I will ask—I hope no news person copies this because it is personal. I have a son who is divorced and he had two children. And we adjusted ourselves to the situation. And our principal concern was for the grandchildren. The parents were very tied up with the law school at the University of Virginia. They were really good friends and compatable people. And to my own observation, although I would not generalize on this because I do not know how to come down on it—where to come down on it, but in their particular case, it had a great deal to do with the fact that she was about as good a lawyer as he.

And although they were in love and had the children, the attractions and feelings of obligations about their respective professions had a lot to do with it becoming very late in the evening when they got together with the kids. Then they had a 50–50 deal with everything exactly the same; he changed as many dirty diapers as she did, which seems to be all the ideal and everything, and she would mow the lawn if he were not there.

But, as I say, I will not come down anywhere on this, but in their particular case I do think it caused a blurring of the roles and a depreciation of their attraction for one another, which led to other exacerbations, and then the breakup.

It was pretty much that simple in my own analysis, and I think that both of them now agree that that is what happened to them. I needed no urging to think about those kids or to try to associate with them. But we are not in the same place.

Is that not even more applicable to this problem since there are probably more kids geographically separated from their grandparents than not at the time of the divorce and in the settling down geographically after the marriage.

What about foster grandparents?

Dr. **Kornhaber**. I think that that is a very good start. But at the beginning it is really a token thing. I had looked into it and it was "look at the old people being cute and helping out these retarded children". It is terrific, and it really has gotten better. But I have written in here an idea called a centrum, where there is a teacher, 5 grandparents, and 20 children in a daycare center, and these grandparents or elders get promoted with the children until sixth grade. You see, they stay with them and they can teach them. They socialize with them, and help them if there are learning problems, if there are family problems. These elders become a vital connection for these kids. This is a substantial and serious program, if we can get it off the ground. This is emotional work for the aged. I feel this is the way elementary schools should be in America. It helps the teachers. It helps the parents and the grandparents and certainly we will raise good kids who will not feel abandoned. I think in one or two generations, if we did things like this, we could turn the country around. We could really change the emotional tone of the country.

I think we have to work with young couples to tell them to think about being grandparents someday and staying in one place. Helping older people to stay in one place (financially) is good also. Keep the family together at all costs.

Senator **Denton**. In my hometown there are a great many young lawyers, bankers, and so on, who could double their salaries were they to leave, and they do not for this reason. It is sort of traditional. I do not mean to be parochial, but it is Southern to stay, at least I think it is more common than in California where you can barely find a native. And I guess that is an idea which could be advertised, if we had a government or a media that wanted to.

Dr. KORNHABER. I think what we have to do is change the concept of work, of not continuing the same grind, but to shift it. And nature primes people to do that especially men.

Senator DENTON. In looking at other grandparents, I can sure sense for them that, by golly, if they have raised 10 of their own and some of them are old enough to babysit with the children of the elder of the two that were born in the 3 years before their children got divorced, and this grandparent is driving a school bus and still taking care of these other kids, it is a little unfair that there could be such a copout for their children by giving the grandparents the leftover job of taking care of the grandparents' progeny's children. In principle, it just does not seem——

Dr. KORNHABER. But, Senator, there is a quality that we do not honor in the spectrum of——

Senator DENTON. I see a lot of that in the black community, as Dr. McAdoo commented on.

Dr. KORNHABER. Well, they are called emotional geniuses. There are people who are emotionally intelligent, you know, we honor intellectual intelligence, physical intelligence, personality, but not emotional intelligence. I lived in the south, in Florida for 8 years. And greatly admired black grandmothers who would just sit there and collect children and care for them.

Senator DENTON. I totally agree, and they are probably the most unrecognized heroines in this country.

Dr. KORNHABER. They are emotional geniuses. They are incredible. When I worked in a hospital, I would always go out into the community and try to find a couple to work because they are just wonderful.

Senator DENTON. Yes.

Dr. KORNHABER. But it goes through all races.

Senator DENTON. Well, that is what galls me, that this Nation does not honor that matriarchy which is so loving as to be self-sacrificing——

Dr. KORNHABER. That is right. We do not honor——

Senator DENTON. With no limit.

Dr. KORNHABER. Emotion. We do not honor motherhood. You see, motherhood is an emotional activity. We do not honor that. We have no room because we worship other gods in this country.

Senator DENTON. You cannot, unfortunately, legislate that. I guess you can——

Dr. KORNHABER. But we can teach it. You see, we are not teaching it enough, and the people who are controlling the teaching media are not—they are not tuned into this ethic. They are tuned into another ethic. And this is why it is difficult to get more publicity.

Senator DENTON. Well, I intend to use these subcommittee hearings—and they are not just going to be four on the family breakdown—but I intend also to use the adoption hearings, the hearings on family planning, and the hearings on child abuse—and then try to present the results to the full committee. The committee was very responsive before, for example, when it adopted unanimously with Metzenbaum and Kennedy, who are not exactly Genghis

Kahn rightwingers, the Adolescent Family Life bill. And they took with me the flack of it. And only now is it slowly beginning to be placed in any kind of perspective in the press. Up until then it was a chastity belt, and I am riveting chastity belts to the 13 year olds, and so forth.

It is nothing like that. And they all knew it. And they all passed it. So maybe we can make this a committee issue. If we can, we might be able to make it a senatorial issue. But if you have any clout with your organizations, and so forth, you have to have that clout felt up here just as the special interest groups or the Government employees or anybody else, the bankers.

We have a national vested interest in survival here, I believe. And I worked for 7 or 8 years trying to get different groups to coordinate, but they will not. They want to do their own thing and it is fortunate that they do. They are independent and therefore innovative.

But on the other hand, they are also jealous of their financial sources and do not want to get together for that reason; they do not want to meld.

Dr. KORNHABER. I would like to give you an example of the lack of honoring emotional bonds. A friend of mine is a general in the Air Force, and I told him, you know, it would be really great if you can get stipends to fly grandparents over once a year to the troups. You know, what is wrong with that?

And he indeed inquired about it, but he came back laughing, you know, forget it. And I think it is things like this that we have to start thinking about.

Senator DENTON. Well, I encourage you and Dr. Wilmarth to submit any further written ideas. Within the bounds of our physiological capabilities will try to do something with them.

Dr. Wilmarth, in your estimation, what are the most common reasons that men feel or give for neglecting to pay adequate and timely child support payments?

Dr. WILMARTH. Well, I think——

Senator DENTON. Then aside from those reasons, what do you think the—the reasons that they give, what do you think the real reasons might be?

Dr. WILMARTH. Well, I think we might as well go to the real reasons because I think there is a lot of resentment anger. They may use this situation as a means to displace that anger. I can recall one of my clients right now who I am dealing with, he, in trying to settle his divorce, the wife asked if she could have some of the meat out of the freezer. And he proceeded to take it up to her and then in their interaction they got into an argument. He then took the meat back out of her car and took it back home.

So it is the idea of what is mine, I will keep, and now that we are divorcing, just see if you can get it.

Senator DENTON. Well, in all fairness—and again, hoping that the press will not pick this up—in all fairness to my son, in the divorce settlement, he said, I do not need the judge to say anything about alimony; I am going to give half of my future wages to my wife and children. He has done that now for over 3 years and has remained in the vicinity so that he can be with those children as much as he can. And he is as fine a parent as I have ever seen.

And that makes it doubly tragic, the biology of the way the thing broke up, to me.

What are your reactions as a family counselor to the proposals that would require that child support payments rise along with any increases in a father's income or any kind of mandatory supervision, such as was mentioned by one of the previous witnesses. I think it was withholding or something like that.

Dr. WILMARTH. OK. If you could clarify once again the question in terms of——

Senator DENTON. Proposals that would require that child support payments to rise along with any increases in the father's income.

Dr. WILMARTH. Well, I think a lot of men, again from the point of view of their——

Senator DENTON. Take a situation like the wife helping him get through college. She works to get him through college and she has a couple of kids in the process and when he graduates he ditches her. And he has no income to speak of at that point, but later becomes a very successful doctor. In the meantime she is struggling, working herself to death trying to handle it.

Dr. WILMARTH. Well, I think if this is a situation in which a person is forced to do this, they will continue to resent it.

I think the problem with that is that——

Senator DENTON. Well, who cares? Who cares if they resent it, if they owe it to society and to their children. I am thinking specifically with respect to development intergenerationally, year by year. If one were to look ahead at a system which insisted that fathers take care of their children would not a man tend to regard marriage in a somewhat more deliberative light before contracting it?

Dr. WILMARTH. I believe your point is well taken, that it apparently is becoming very easy to disassociate oneself from the responsibilities of parenting. And males certainly do this. They do not do it without cost, though. It causes them to develop a sense of inferiority and inadequacy.

Senator DENTON. I agree. In fact, the worst punishment that can be brought upon a person is the punishment he brings upon himself when he receives none which he knows is due from outside. That is the worst punishment.

Well, thank you very much for your testimony, gentlemen. And if you have anything else to add, please do it in writing and be responsive to questions that we might submit to you in writing, if you will.

And thank you, those who remain, for your interest and attendance.

[The following information was supplied for the record:]

TESTIMONY OF
MOTHERS WITHOUT CUSTODY
SUBMITTED TO
FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
March 24, 1983

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Sheila Brayman, President of the association MOTHERS WITHOUT CUSTODY, and on their behalf, I thank you for this opportunity to present testimony to the Family and Human Services Subcommittee.

MOTHERS WITHOUT CUSTODY is an international nonprofit support organization for women living apart from their child(ren) for a variety of reasons:

- o Voluntary exchange of custody with former husband or family member;
- o Coerced voluntary exchange of custody with former husband or family member due to exerted pressure from husband and/or others;
- o Court decisions;
- o Childnapping by former husband or family member;
- o State intervention.

MOTHERS WITHOUT CUSTODY's primary goals are the emotional support of mothers who do not have physical custody of their children and the education of the public to dispel society's negative judgement of non-custodial mothers by promoting the general welfare of children.

Founded in February, 1981 the Association began with five members and in two years has grown to a membership of 1,000. One hundred Chapters across the United States provide local support group meetings.

Based on analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau statistics, it has been determined that there are between 500,000 to 1,000,000 mothers in the United States living apart from their children. Statistics also show that for every two marriages there is one divorce. With statistics such as these, MOTHERS WITHOUT CUSTODY is playing a vital role in helping mothers explore their custodial options and providing emotional support to those mothers who do live apart from their children.

"Extended families," "child support," "stepparenting," and "joint custody" have certainly become not only common phrases, but familiar issues. The roles of non-custodial mothers (and joint custodial mothers) are also being recognized. The majority of MW/OC members were homemakers tending to their family's needs. Lack of self-confidence, self-worth and loss of identity are common feelings of these mothers. However, the vast majority of the women who voluntarily exchanged custody, did so in the best interest of their child(ren).

The adjustment to living apart from their children goes far beyond the innermost emotional feelings of these mothers; regardless of the circumstances leading to the non-custodial situations.

The sense of loss and lack of purpose weigh heavily in their minds. Unfortunately, society's judgement that mothers, in order to be mothers, must physically be with their children, reinforces any doubts these women have. Job harassment, lack of cooperation from school administrators and state judicial contradictions are clear prejudices against non-custodial mothers.

When parents divorce and the father moves out, "society" assumes (and consoles) men for the "loss" of their childre. When parents divorce and the mother moves out, "society" judges women as "unfit," "unnatural," and "unfeeling." It is imperative that we change these attitudes. By educating and encouraging fathers to be nurturing and loving and by encouraging and allowing mothers to expand beyond their mothering roles, not only will these parents grow, but our children will benefit. Children need love from both parents.

The increase of non-custodial mother situations and the great need for our association MOTHERS WITHOUT CUSTODY is highlighted and substantiated by the thousands of inquiries for information about our organization that we receive. April, 1983 issues of Redbook and MS. magazines carry articles about divorce, custody and the impact on parents and children. As of today, these issues of Redbook and MS. have been available for only approximately one week. Yet, MOTHERS WITHOUT CUSTODY has received approximately 150 letters from non-custodial mothers wanting more information based on the information included in these articles about our existence. The most common statement in the inquiries is "I thought I was the only one."

MOTHERS WITHOUT CUSTODY commends this Committee for its interest in the changing roles of families, and we urge you to continue the study - with the sincere expectation for the betterment of family health.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for this opportunity to present our views. We welcome any questions you might have and we would be happy to provide any additional information the Committee might request.

3/24/83

Sheila Brayman, President
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Bureau of the Census
Washington, D.C. 20233

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MAY 0 2 1983

Honorable Jeremiah Denton
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Denton:

Thank you for your letter requesting information on out-of-wedlock births and adoptions in the United States.

The Census Bureau does not collect data on the numbers of out-of-wedlock births in the United States. The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), collects and annually publishes data on out-of-wedlock births based on tabulations from birth certificates as reported by the vital statistics departments of individual states. In 1980 41 states and the District of Columbia reported information on out-of-wedlock births. Data for the remaining states were inferred by comparing the mother's surname with the father's surname on the birth certificate.

The Census Bureau presently does not collect information on children placed up for adoption or on characteristics of persons who have adopted children. Data on these topics also are collected by the NCHS in the cycle of surveys entitled the National Survey of Family Growth. The latest survey, which was conducted in 1982, will not have any data available for analysis before Fall 1984. Dr. Christine Bachrach of the NCHS has published data on the frequency of adoption based on the 1976 survey.

The Census Bureau currently is considering collecting data on the number of women who have ever adopted a child. Data collection on this topic is anticipated for the June 1984 supplement to the Current Population Survey with the DHHS as a possible co-sponsor in this effort. We estimate that the survey will obtain adoption information for only 500 respondents out of a sample universe of approximately 25,000 ever-married women 18 to 44 years old. The amount of analysis that can be accomplished from this sample size is limited because of the small anticipated sample population.

The small number of adoptive parents will plague any attempt at survey analysis and suggests that a system of administrative records be instituted to investigate this issue. Since adoption procedures involve private agencies and attorneys, hospitals, state and local court systems, and the adoptive parents understandable right to privacy, a national system of uniform adoption reporting is likely to prove difficult to enact. Currently, states do not have to report uniform information on birth, marriage, or divorce certificates.

The problems that exist in collecting adoption data also will be faced in the collection of data on foster children. In addition, the cooperation and record-keeping systems of local social service agencies probably will be required to compile data on placements of foster children.

I will keep you informed of the progress we are making in our research on these issues.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Bruce Chapman

BRUCE CHAPMAN
Director
Bureau of the Census

Senator **Denton**. Until our next hearing in this series, this hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:15 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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